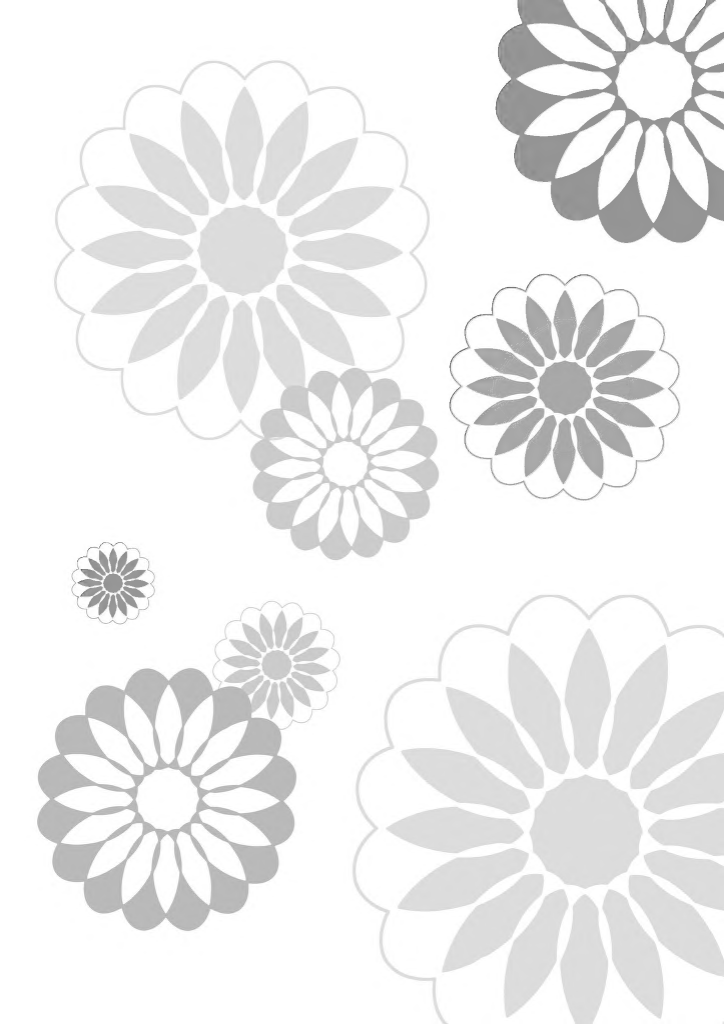
ああっ女神さまっ
藤島康介
KOSUKE FUJISHIMA
46
Oh My Goddess!



Oh My Goddess! 46

ああっ女神さまっ

STORY AND ART BY
Kosuke Fujishima

TRANSLATION BY
Dana Lewis and Christopher Lewis

LETTERING AND TOUCHUP BY
Susie Lee AND Betty Dong
WITH Tom2K

DARK HORSE MANGA

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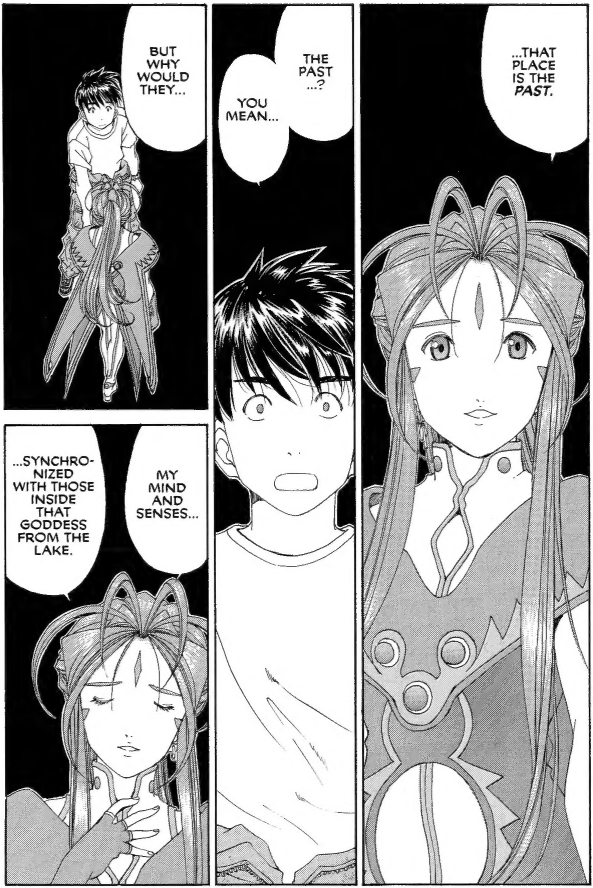
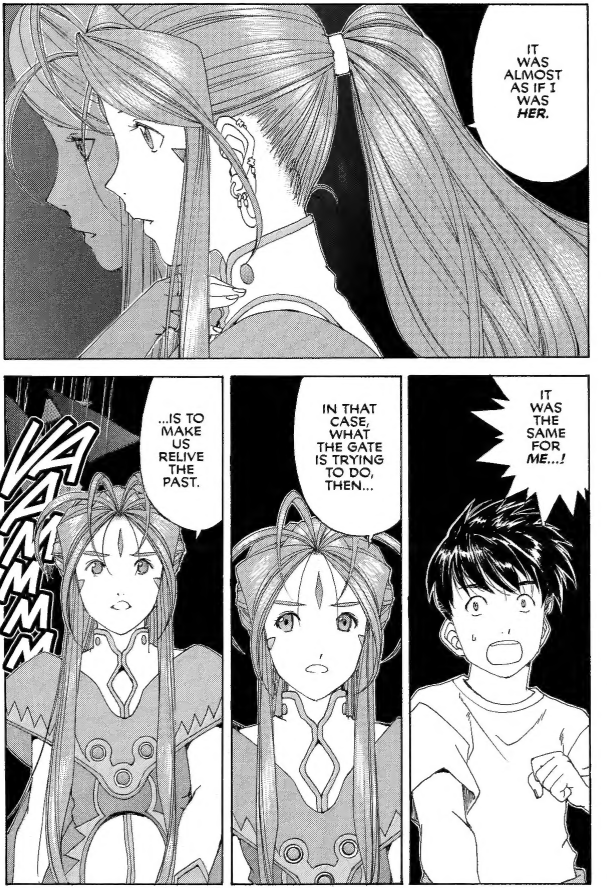
CHAPTER 290

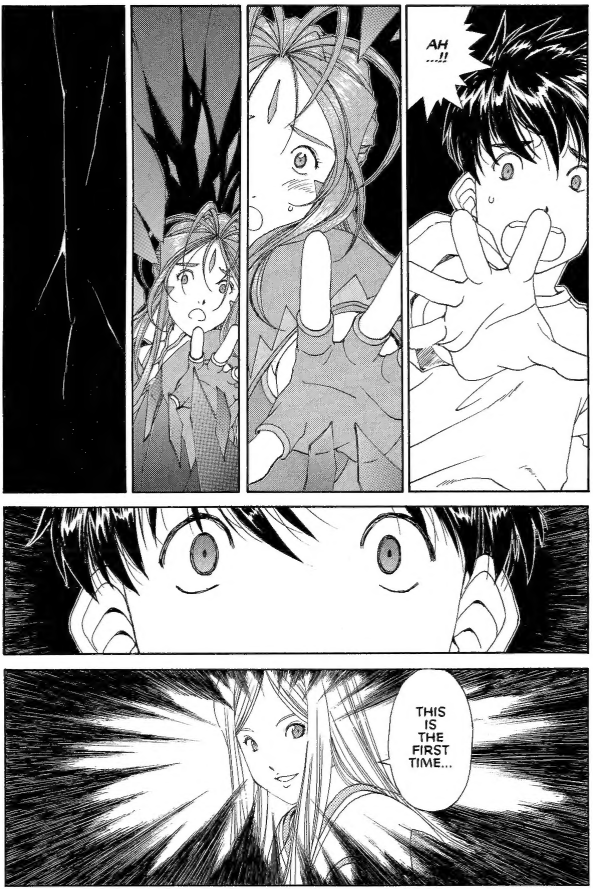
What the Eye Sees

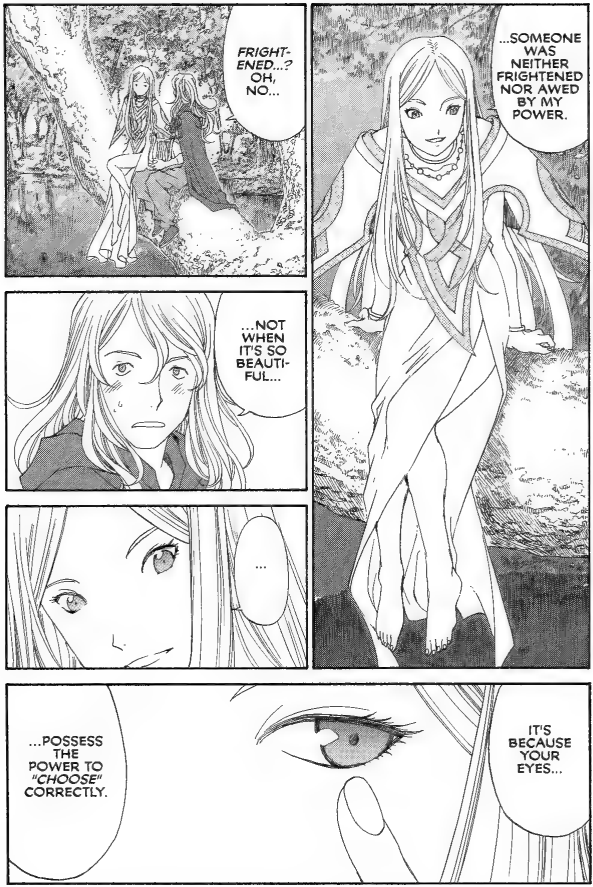

...THAT PLACE IS THE *PAST*.
THE PAST ...?
YOU MEAN...
BUT WHY WOULD THEY...
MY MIND AND SENSES...
...SYNCHRO-NIZED WITH THOSE INSIDE THAT GODDESS FROM THE LAKE.

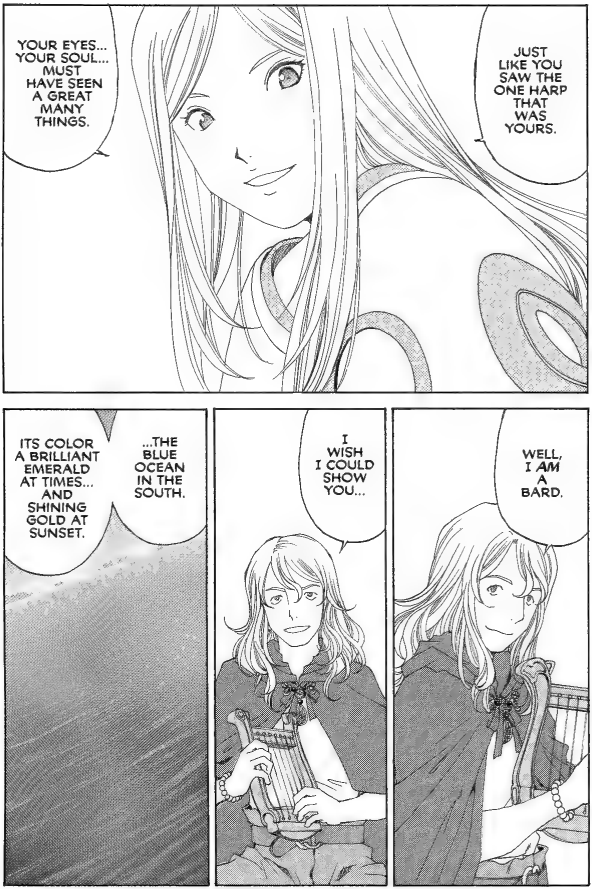

IT WAS ALMOST AS IF I WAS *HER.*
IT WAS THE SAME FOR *ME...!*
IN THAT CASE, WHAT THE GATE IS TRYING TO DO, THEN...
...IS TO MAKE US RELIVE THE PAST.
KAMMM

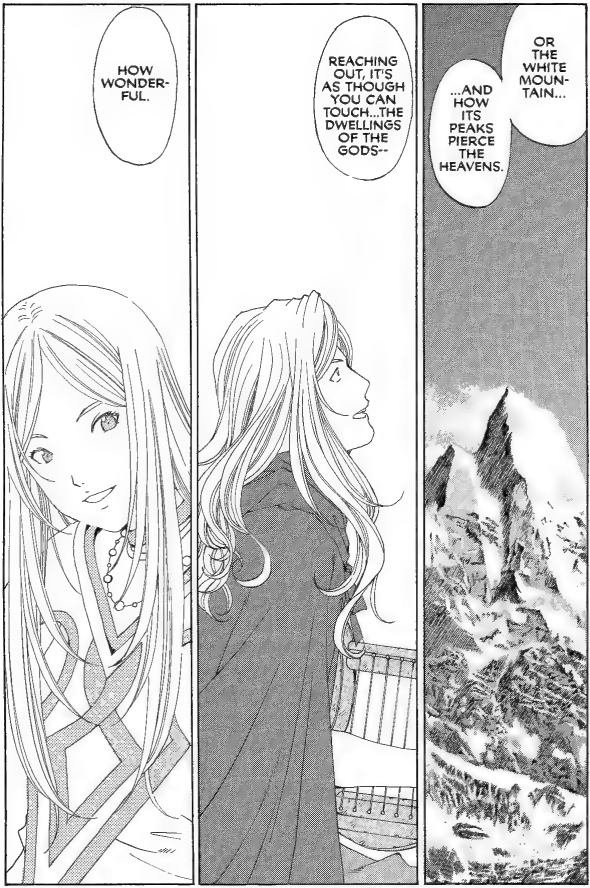
!!
SPOILERS...
...AREN'T ALLOWED.
...!

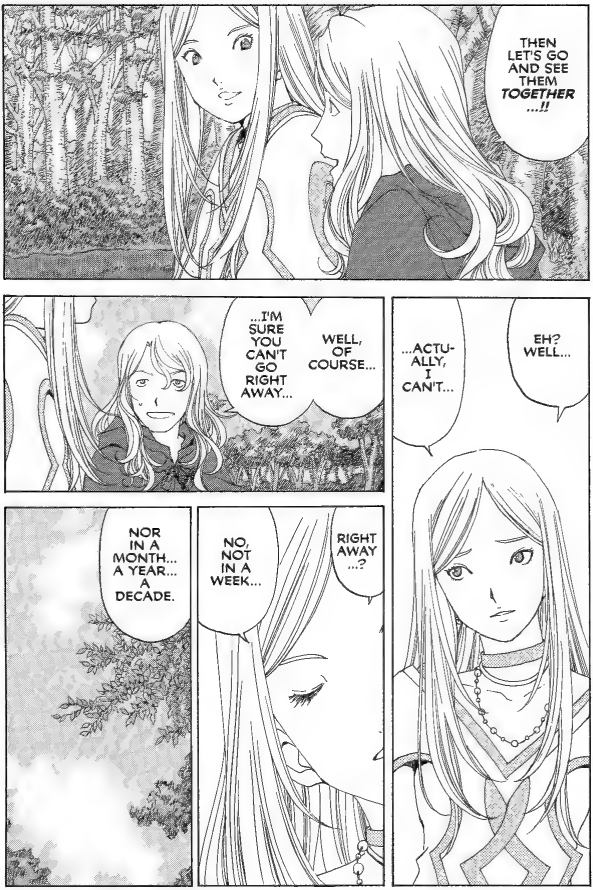
WAAH
!!
WHO
OOM


AH ...!!
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...


FRIGHT-
ENED...?
OH,
NO...
...SOMEONE
WAS
NEITHER
FRIGHTENED
NOR AWED
BY MY
POWER.
...NOT
WHEN
IT'S SO
BEAUTI-
FUL...
...
...POSSESS
THE
POWER TO
"CHOOSE"
CORRECTLY.
IT'S
BECAUSE
YOUR
EYES...


YOUR EYES... YOUR SOUL... MUST HAVE SEEN A GREAT MANY THINGS.
JUST LIKE YOU SAW THE ONE HARP THAT WAS YOURS.
ITS COLOR A BRILLIANT EMERALD AT TIMES... AND SHINING GOLD AT SUNSET.
...THE BLUE OCEAN IN THE SOUTH.
I WISH I COULD SHOW YOU...
WELL, I AM A BARD.

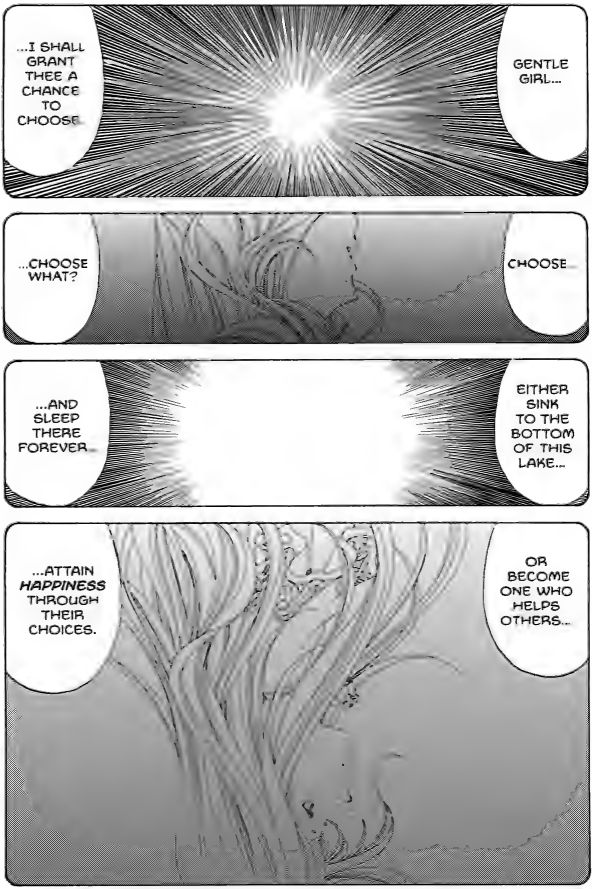

HOW WONDER-FUL.
REACHING OUT, IT'S AS THOUGH YOU CAN TOUCH...THE DWELLINGS OF THE GODS--
...AND HOW ITS PEAKS PIERCE THE HEAVENS.
OR THE WHITE MOUN-TAIN...

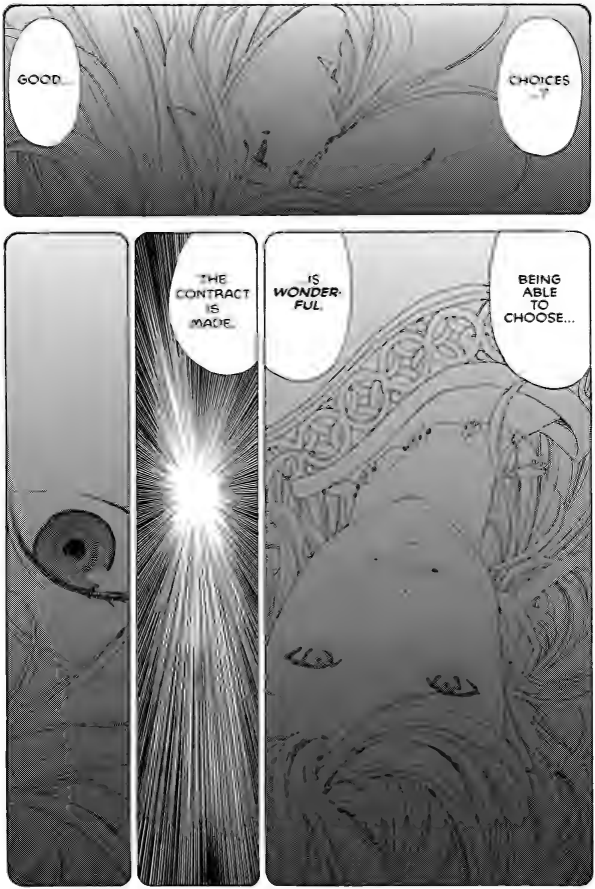

THEN LET'S GO AND SEE THEM TOGETHER ...!!
EH? WELL...
...ACTU-ALLY, I CAN'T...
WELL, OF COURSE...
...I'M SURE YOU CAN'T GO RIGHT AWAY...
RIGHT AWAY ...?
NO, NOT IN A WEEK...
NOR IN A MONTH... A YEAR... A DECADE.

EH?
I'M STUCK HERE FOREVER.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ...?
I'M NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THIS LAKE.
...I BECAME THE GODDESS OF THE LAKE IN RETURN FOR THAT.

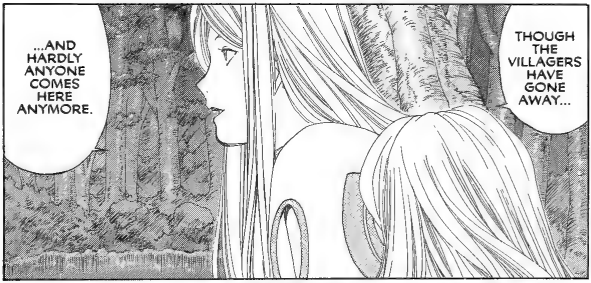
I WAS *SACRIFICED*...
...TO THIS LAKE.
MY VILLAGE HAD A SOURCE OF WATER THAT WAS RUNNING DRY.
EITHER THE VILLAGE WOULD DIE... OR I WOULD.
I HAD NO CHOICE.
AND I *ACCEPTED* THAT, TOO.

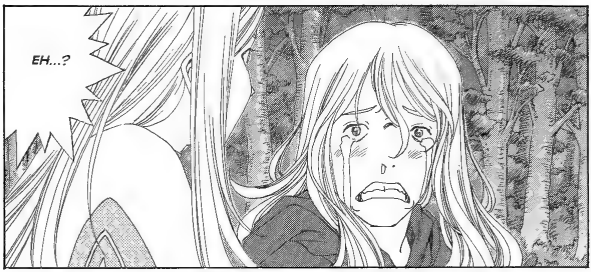
eh?
I NEEDED NO SACRIFICE...
I HEARD A VOICE...
BUT, JUST BEFORE I PASSED OUT...
ALTHOUGH I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER,
I SUPPOSE I DIED...

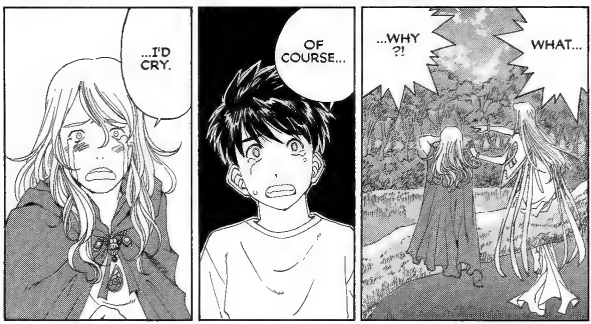

...I SHALL GRANT THEE A CHANCE TO CHOOSE
GENTLE GIRL...
...CHOOSE WHAT?
CHOOSE...
...AND SLEEP THERE FOREVER...
EITHER SINK TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS LAKE...
...ATTAIN *HAPPINESS* THROUGH THEIR CHOICES.
OR BECOME ONE WHO HELPS OTHERS...

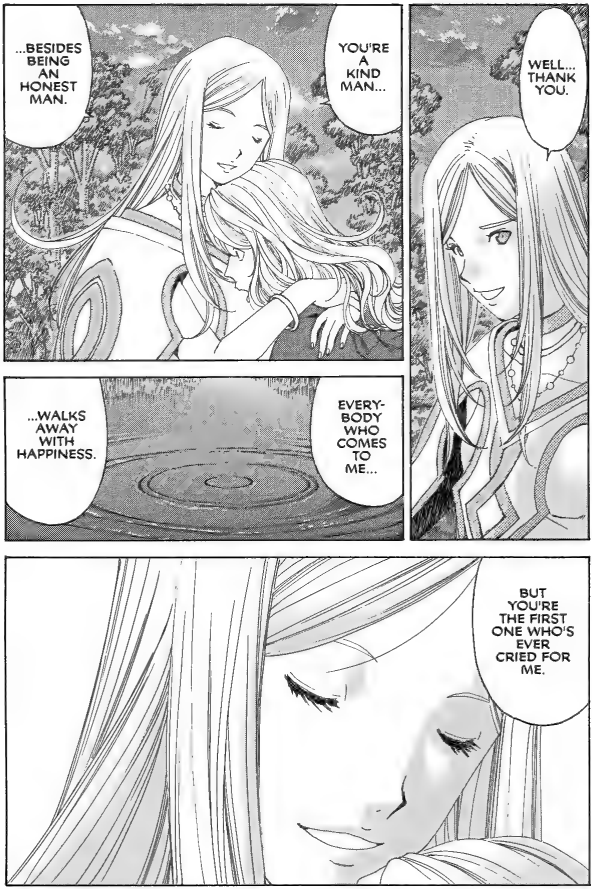

GOOD...
CHOICES...
THE CONTRACT IS MADE.
IS WONDER-FUL.
BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE...

...THE GODDESS OF CHOICES AT THIS LAKE.
AND EVER SINCE, I'VE BEEN...


THOUGH THE VILLAGERS HAVE GONE AWAY...
...AND HARDLY ANYONE COMES HERE ANYMORE.


EH...?


WHAT...
...WHY ?!
OF COURSE...
...I'D CRY.

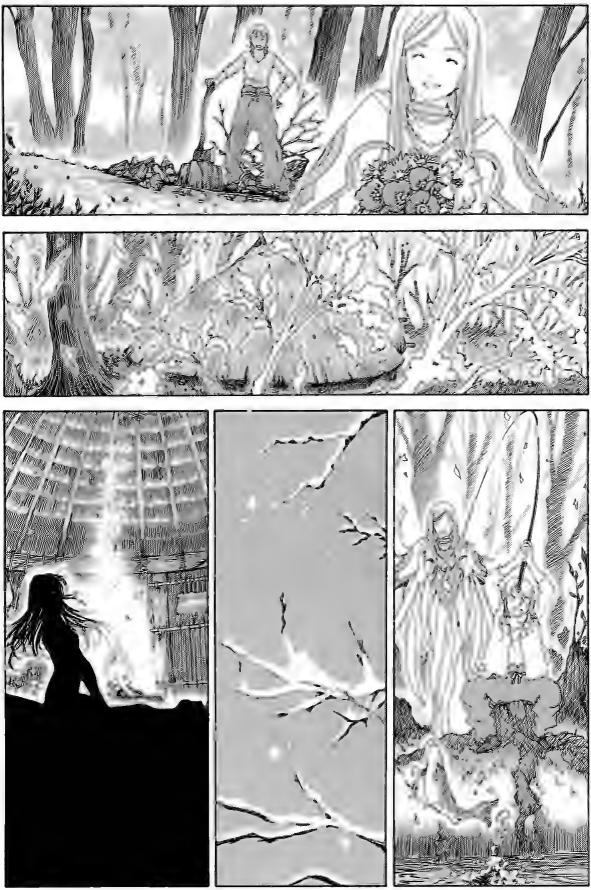

...BESIDES BEING AN HONEST MAN.
YOU'RE A KIND MAN...
WELL... THANK YOU.
...WALKS AWAY WITH HAPPINESS.
EVERY-BODY WHO COMES TO ME...
BUT YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE WHO'S EVER CRIED FOR ME.

BESIDES, I'M ACTUALLY QUITE PLEASED...
...TO BE A GODDESS.
I WON'T LET YOU HAVE ANY OF IT.
MY SORROW IS STRICTLY MY OWN.
AL-THOUGH, YOU'RE ALSO...
...A FOOL, YOU KNOW

ANY OF YOUR SORROW WITH ME
IF YOU WON'T SHARE
I'M SAD
EVEN SO
SO I WON'T LET YOU STOP IT
THEN THE SORROW I FEEL FOR YOU IS ALL MINE

BUT...
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU... AFTER ALL...
SEE...?
YOU REALLY *ARE* A FOOL...

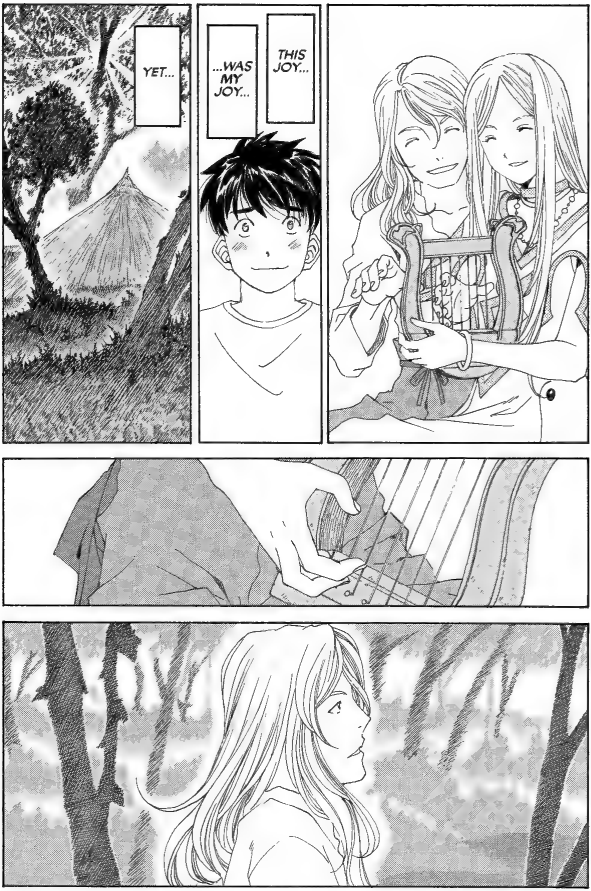
I'LL STAY HERE
FOR-EVER
...BUT YOU'RE A TRAVELER, AREN'T YOU?
I WAS A TRAVELER.
YES.
BUT NOT ANY MORE.



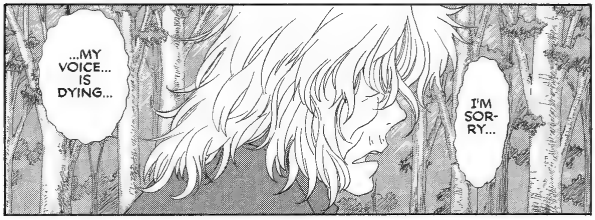
TO KNOW THAT'S JUST A DREAM
BUT A TIME COMES, TOO
WOULD LAST FOR-EVER
AND MY HAPPI-NESS

CHAPTER 291

Visions I Want You to See, Music I Want You to Hear

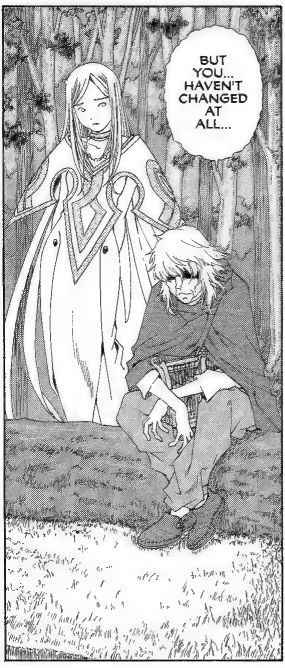

YET...
...WAS MY JOY...
THIS JOY...

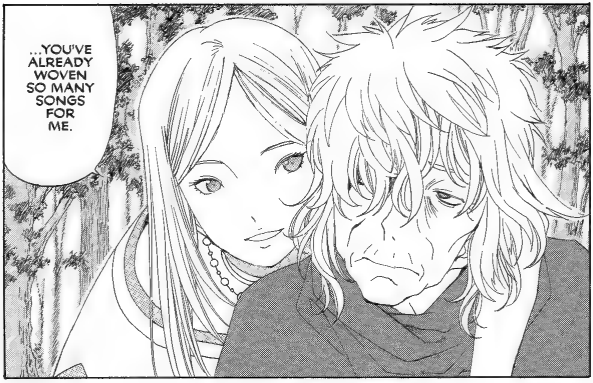
...ANY OF IT.
I DIDN'T RE-GRET...
YES.

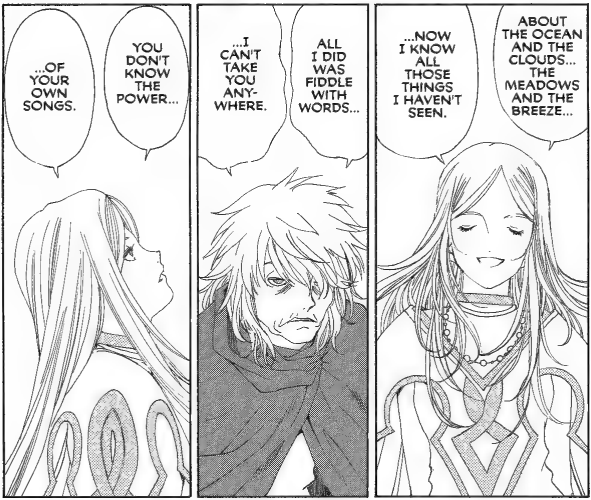

...MY VOICE... IS DYING...
I'M SOR-RY...

YOU SEE...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

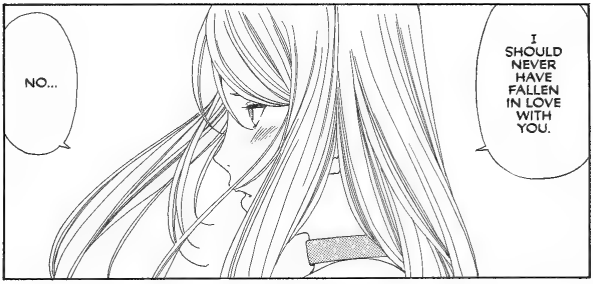
...IT WON'T BE LONG.
I CAN FEEL IT...

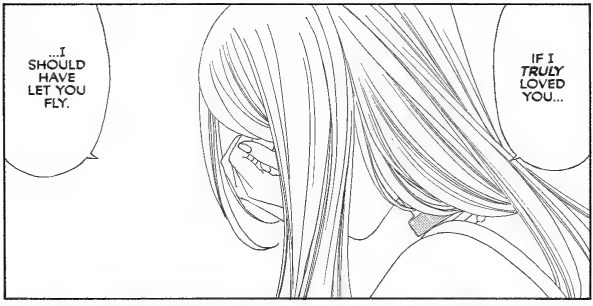

BUT YOU... HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL...

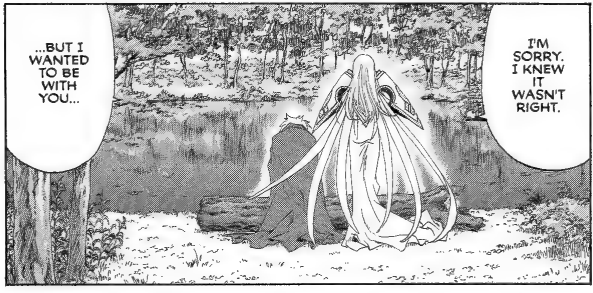

...YOU'VE ALREADY WOVEN SO MANY SONGS FOR ME.


...OF YOUR OWN SONGS.
YOU DON'T KNOW THE POWER...
...I CAN'T TAKE YOU ANY-WHERE.
ALL I DID WAS FIDDLE WITH WORDS...
...NOW I KNOW ALL THOSE THINGS I HAVEN'T SEEN.
ABOUT THE OCEAN AND THE CLOUDS... THE MEADOWS AND THE BREEZE...

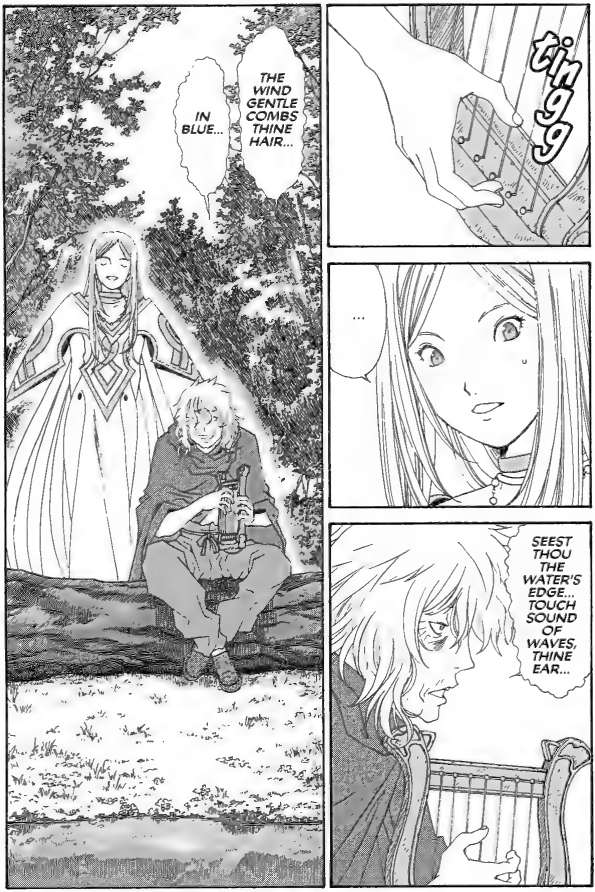
I'M SORRY I BOUND... ...A TRAVELER LIKE YOU.
I'M THE ONE TO APOLOGIZE.
WITH MY OWN EYES.
I SAW.


I SHOULD NEVER HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.
NO...


IF I *TRULY* LOVED YOU...
...I SHOULD HAVE LET YOU FLY.

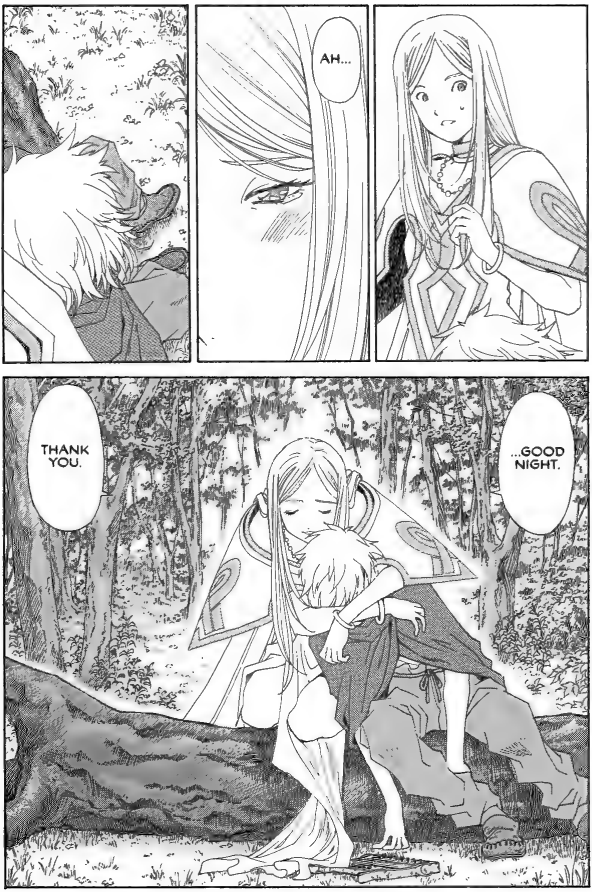

I'M SORRY. I KNEW IT WASN'T RIGHT.
...BUT I WANTED TO BE WITH YOU...

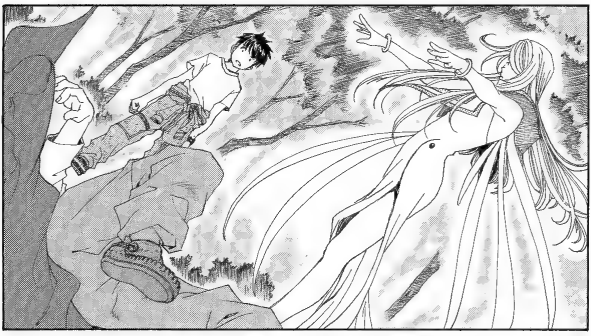
...EITHER, DO YOU.
YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND...
I HAVE NO REGRETS ABOUT MEETING YOU.
ABOUT STAYING HERE.

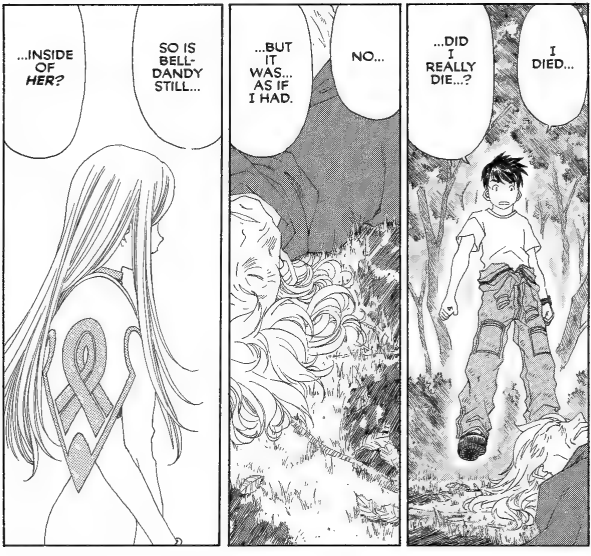

THE WIND GENTLE COMBS THINE HAIR...
IN BLUE...
ting
...
SEEST THOU THE WATER'S EDGE... TOUCH SOUND OF WAVES, THINE EAR...

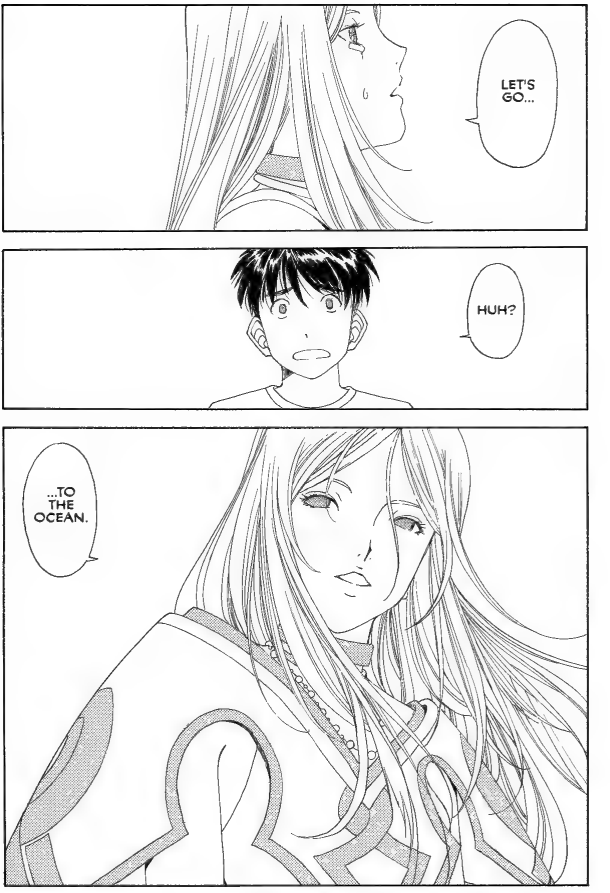
THE BLUE I SEE WITH THEE... THE BLUE I HEAR WITH THEE...

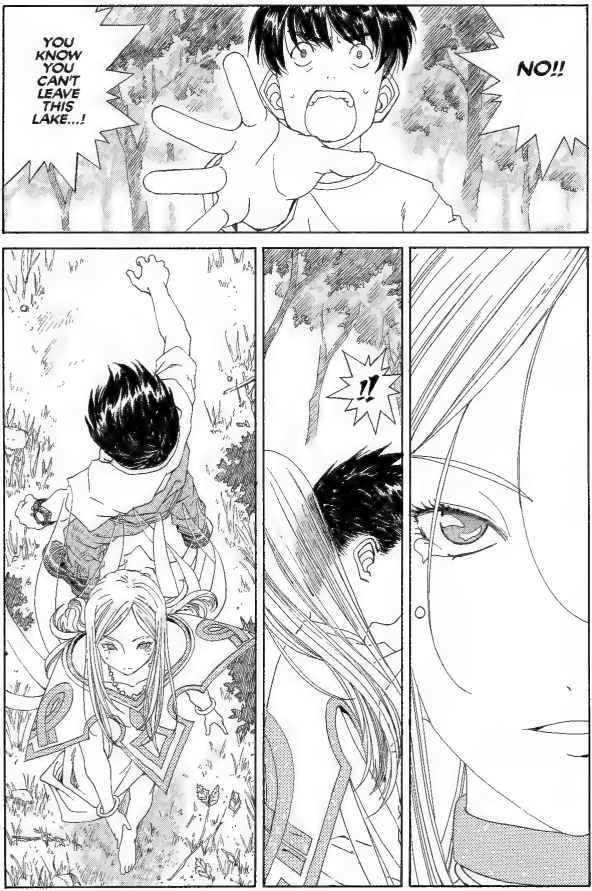
THE SANDS I WALK...
...WITH THEE.


AH...
THANK YOU.
..GOOD NIGHT.

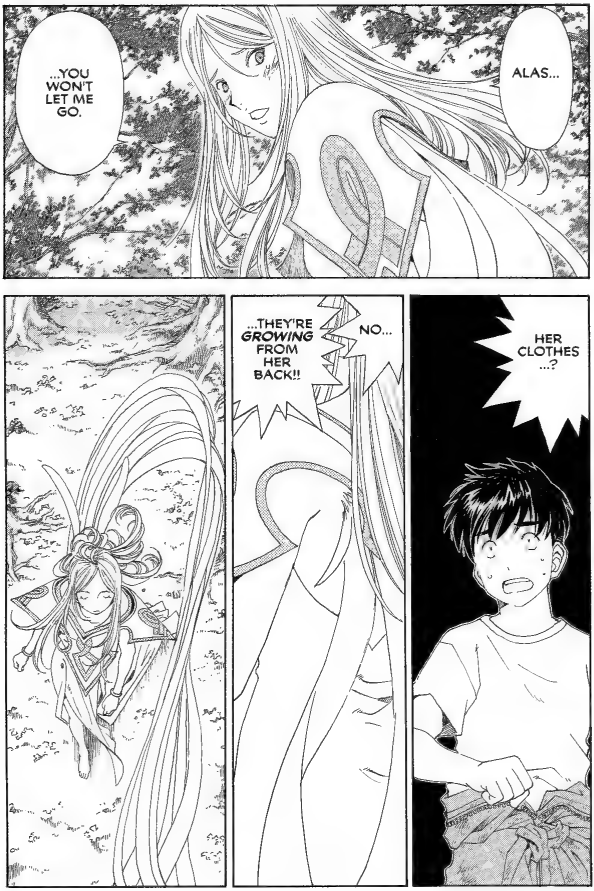


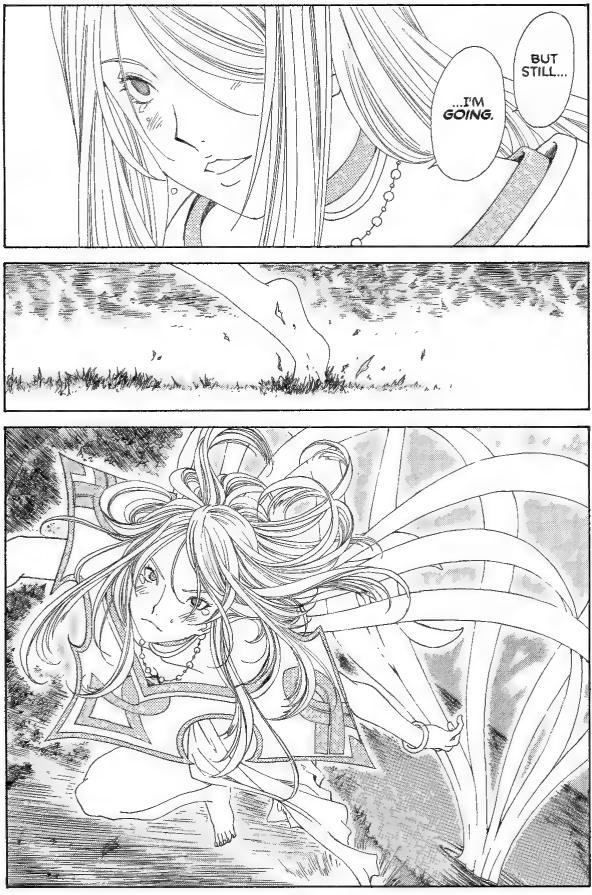

I DIED...
...DID I REALLY DIE...?
NO...
...BUT IT WAS... AS IF I HAD.
SO IS BELL-DANDY STILL...
...INSIDE OF *HER?*


LET'S GO...
HUH?
...TO THE OCEAN.

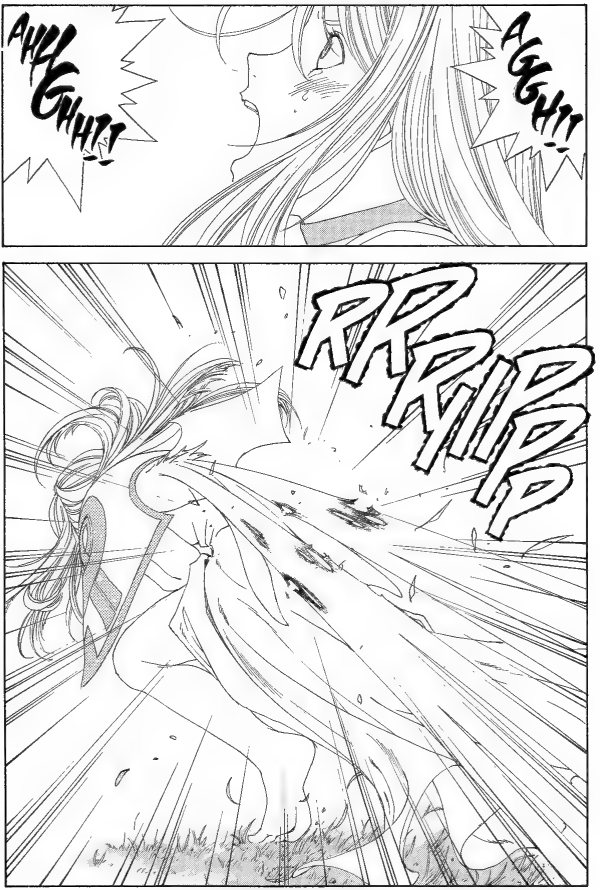

YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T LEAVE THIS LAKE...!
NO!!
!!

...OCEAN.
TO THE BLUE...
TO THE OCEAN...
HER EYES...
shingg


ALAS...
...YOU WON'T LET ME GO.
HER CLOTHES ...?
NO...
...THEY'RE *GROWING* FROM HER BACK!!


BUT STILL...
...I'M GOING.

SNAP
URGH !!
AHHG..
...!


AHHGHHH!
AGGH!!
RRRIP

CHAPTER 292

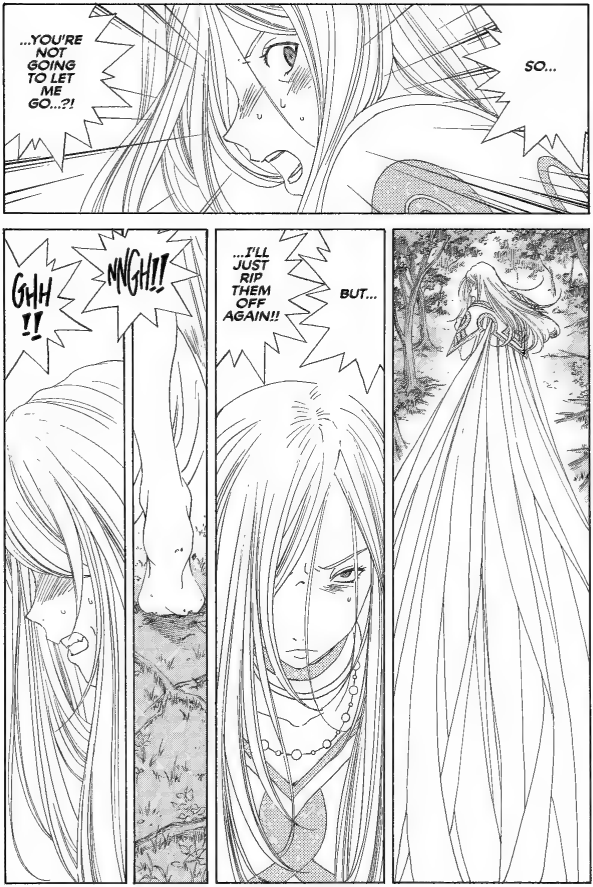
Onward, to That Place Beyond

AGGH!!
RIPP
HRGGH!!
STOP!!

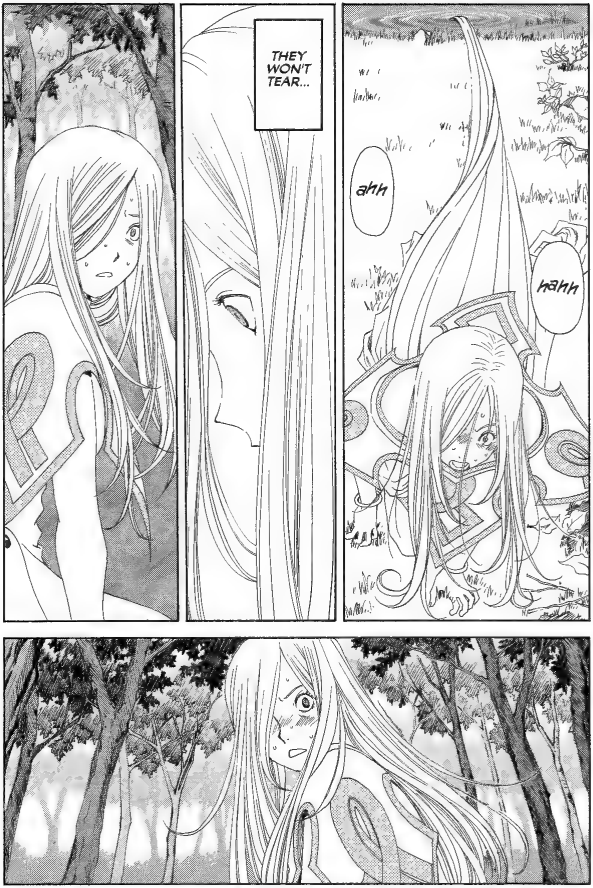
KRRRGHH!

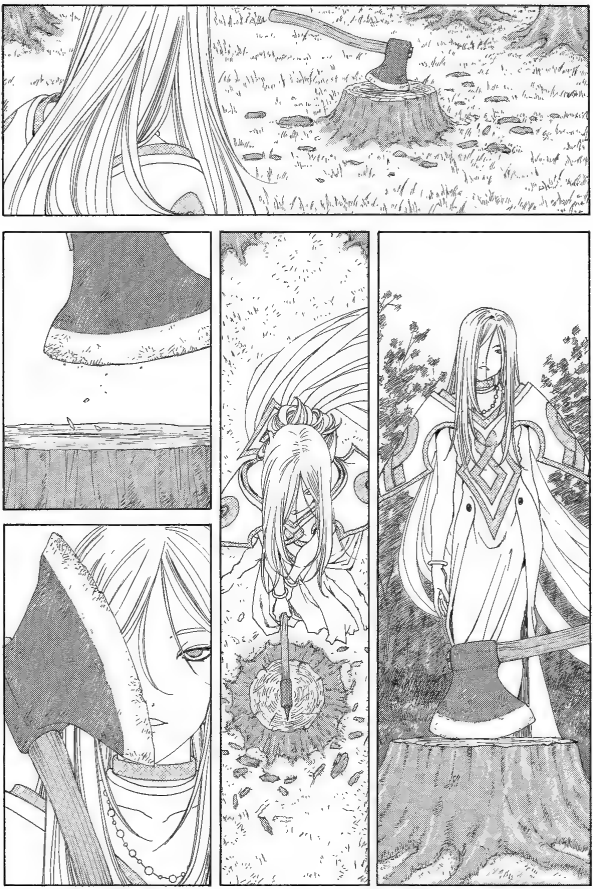
SNAP
THIS ISN'T WHAT HE WANTED ...!!
!!

I-
I'M
FREE...!


...YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET ME GO...?!
SO...
GHH !!
MNGH!!
...I'LL JUST RIP THEM OFF AGAIN!!
BUT...

UNGG
AAA!!

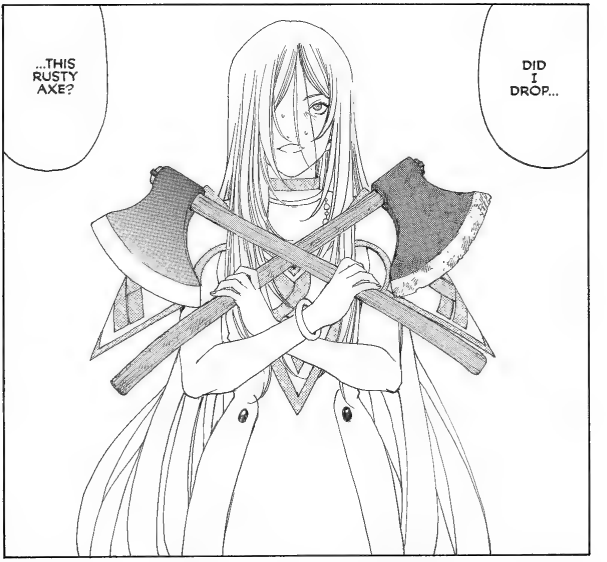

THEY WON'T TEAR...
AHH
HAHH

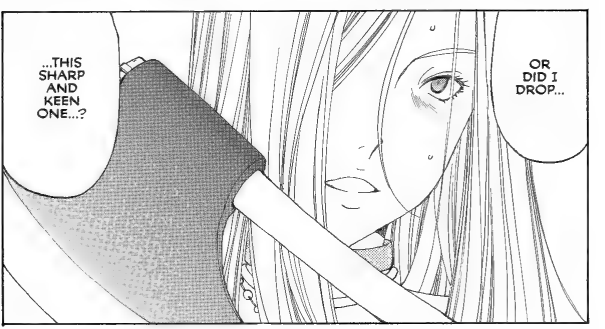


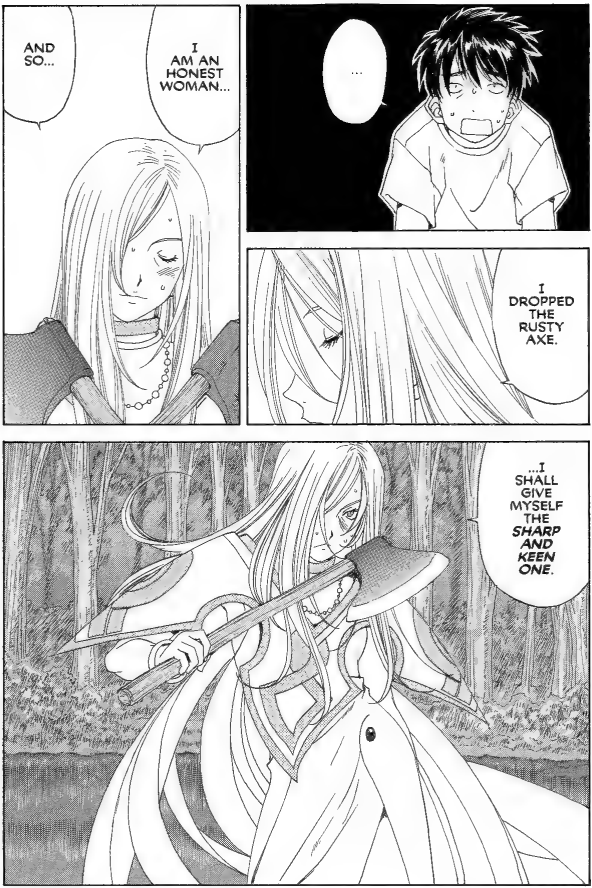
...THE EDGE IS RUSTED!
THE BONDS ARE STRONGER NOW...
shake
HAHH!!
TWANGG
...I NEED A BETTER ONE...
A BETTER AXE...
...!

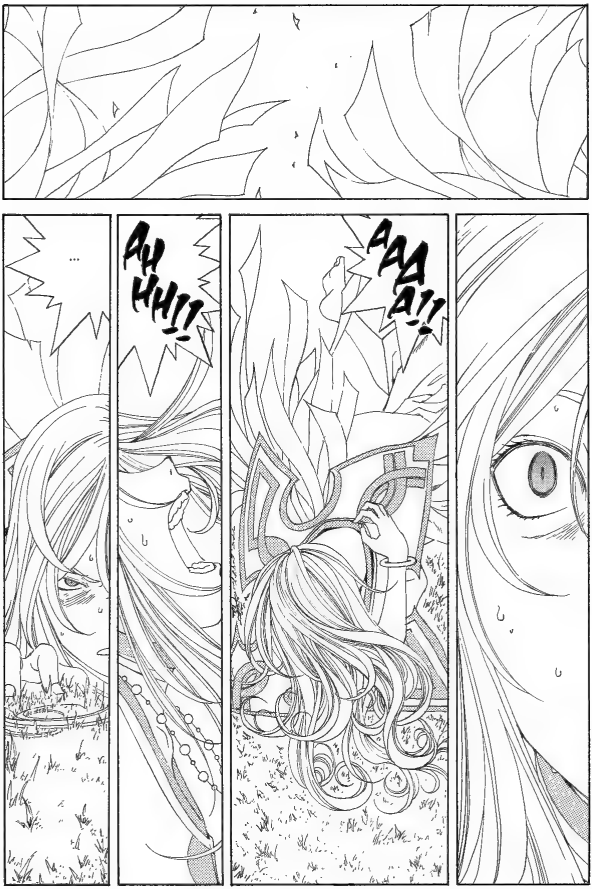
THAN THIS...
BETTER...
SPLOOSH

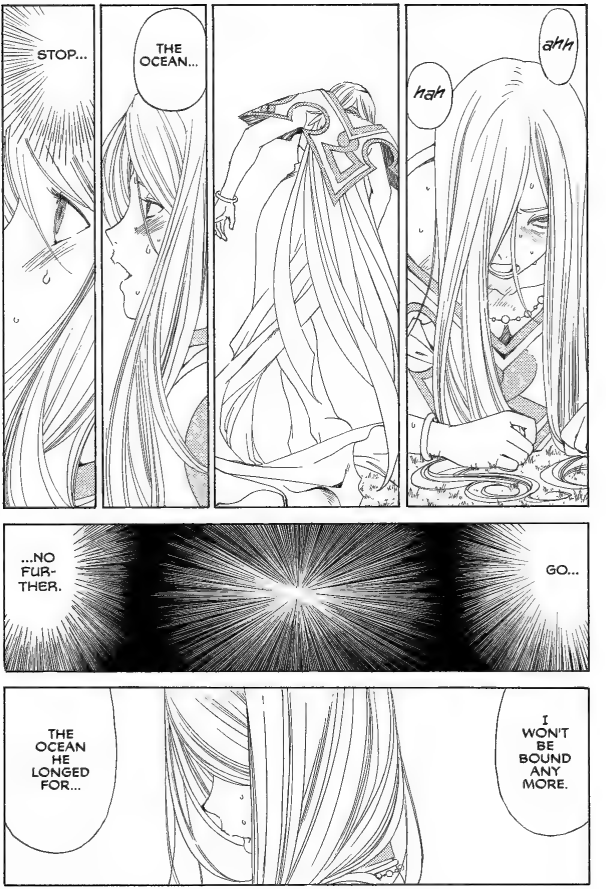
wiwiwm
?
WHAAA

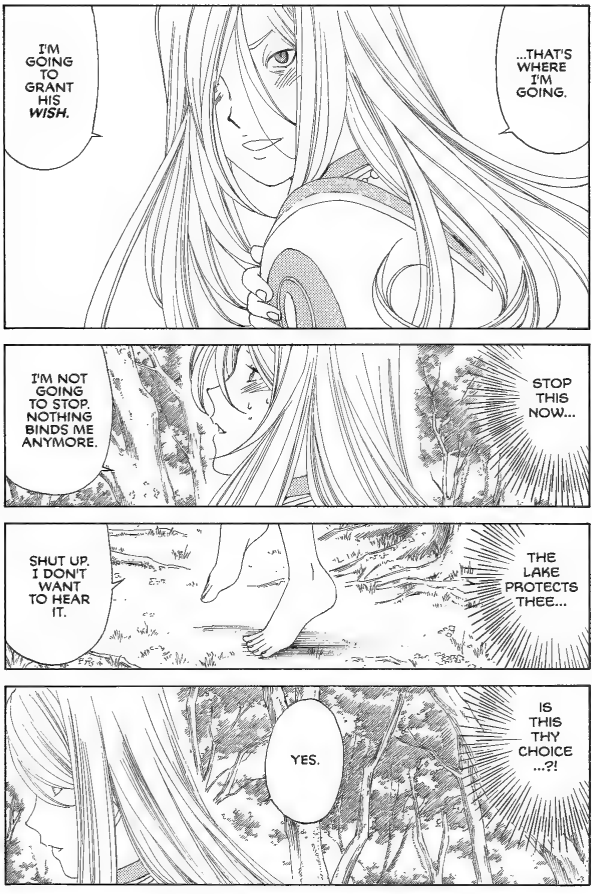

...THIS RUSTY AXE?
DID I DROP...

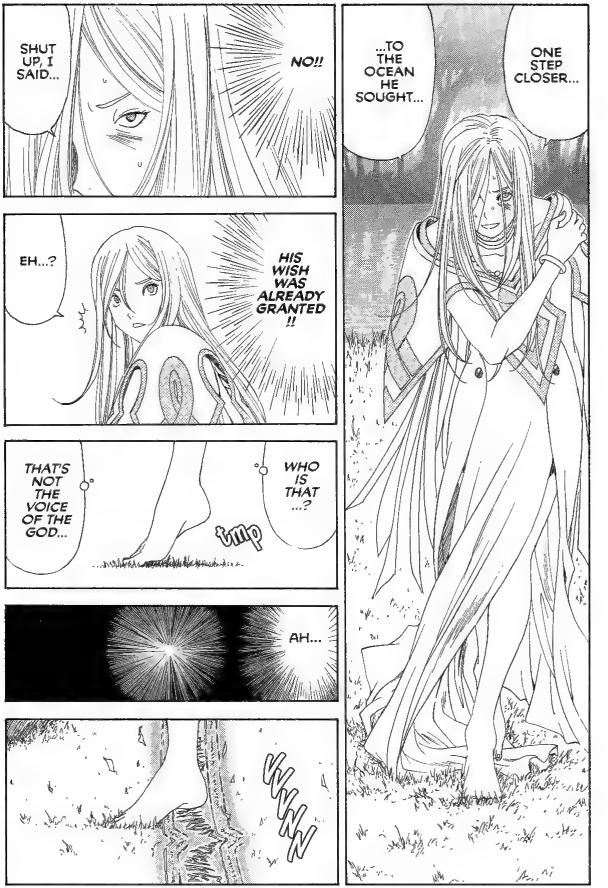

...THIS SHARP AND KEEN ONE...?
OR DID I DROP...


AND SO...
I AM AN HONEST WOMAN...
...
I DROPPED THE RUSTY AXE.
...I SHALL GIVE MYSELF THE SHARP AND KEEN ONE.


...
AH HH!!
AAAA!!


STOP...
THE OCEAN...
hah
ahh
...NO FUR-THER.
GO...
THE OCEAN HE LONGED FOR...
I WON'T BE BOUND ANY MORE.


I'M GOING TO GRANT HIS *WISH.*
...THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING.
I'M NOT GOING TO STOP. NOTHING BINDS ME ANYMORE.
STOP THIS NOW...
SHUT UP. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.
THE LAKE PROTECTS THEE...
YES.
IS THIS THY CHOICE ...?!


ONE STEP CLOSER...
...TO THE OCEAN HE SOUGHT...
NO!!
SHUT UP, I SAID...
HIS WISH WAS ALREADY GRANTED !!
EH...?
WHO IS THAT ...?
THAT'S NOT THE VOICE OF THE GOD...
tmp
AH...
VVVVV

NO...!
WHOOSH

W-
WHAT
...?!
AWAY FROM THE LAKE... THOU ART A GODDESS NO LONGER!
THE LAKE IS THY SOURCE OF POWER...
THOU ART A GODDESS ONLY BY THE LAKESIDE...

CHAPTER 293

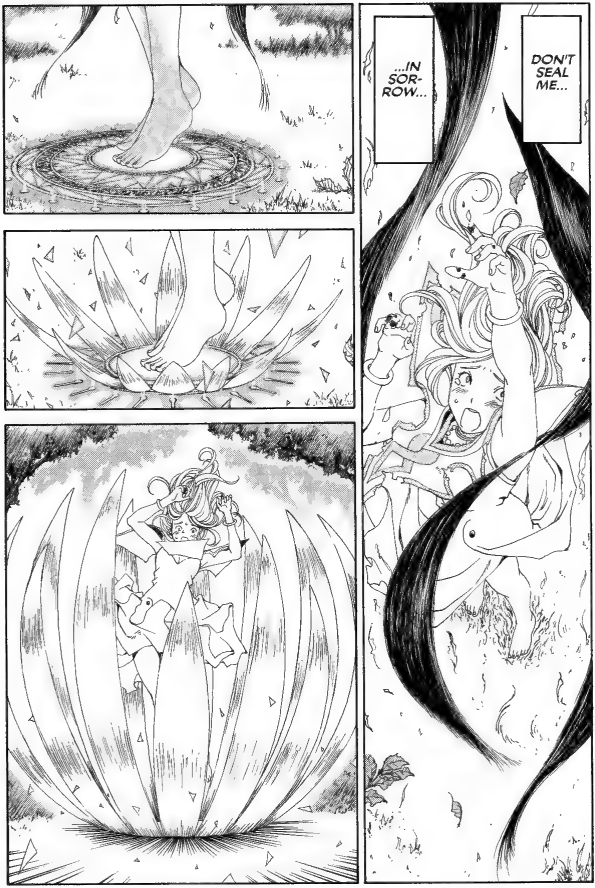
Beyond That Ocean Yet Unseen

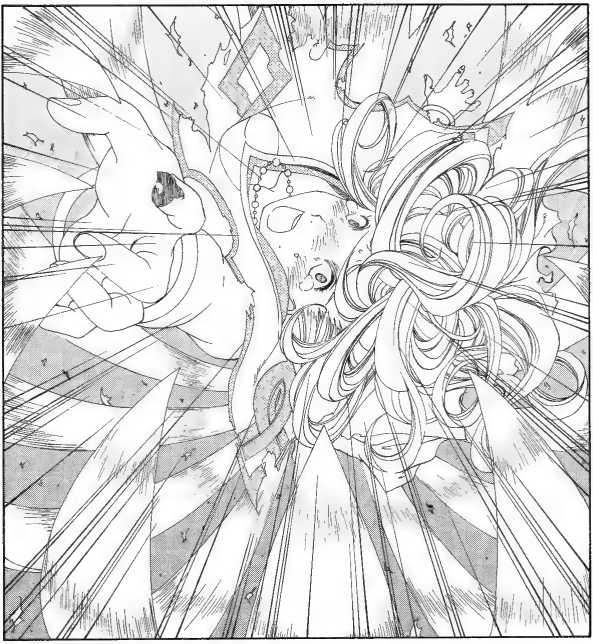
THIS IS THE END...
WHAT SUSTAINED THINE HOLY GODDESS BODY...
...WAS THE POWER OF ALL THE SOULS THAT SLEEP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE.
WITHOUT THAT PROTECTION...
...THOU SHALT NOW VANISH.

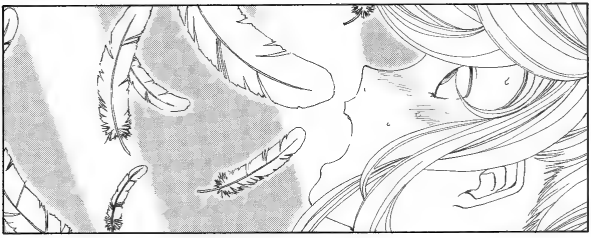
VAN...
VANISH.
THAT MIGHT NOT BE SO BAD...
WILL YOU FORGIVE ME...?
ONE STEP...
...IT WAS ONLY ONE STEP.

...CLOSER TO YOUR OCEAN.
BUT IT WAS ONE STEP...
THOU ART ONE DRAWN TO SORROW.
SOR-ROW SHALL DIS-TORT THY DIVIN-ITY...
...DIS-TORTED GODHOOD SHALL MAKE THEE A GODDESS OF PLAGUES.
THUS...
...I SEAL THEE.

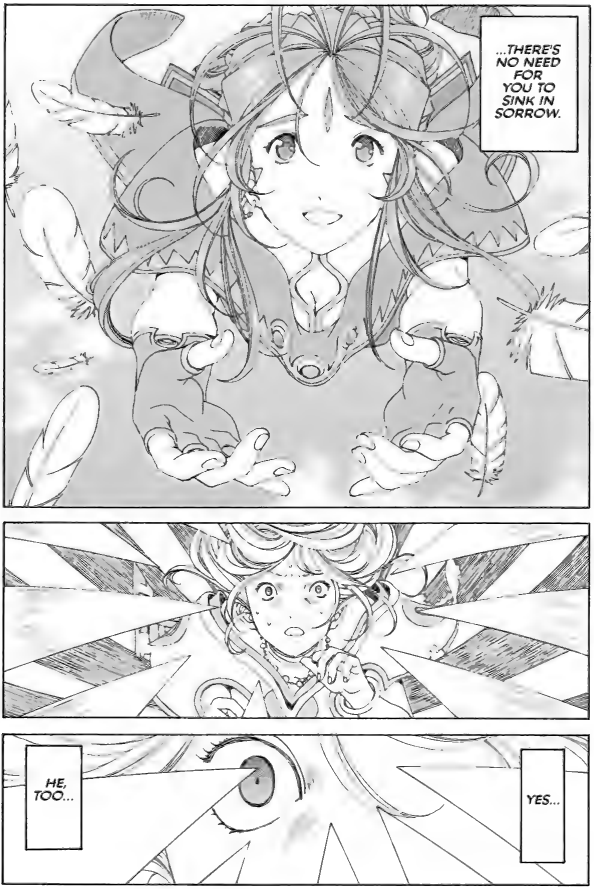
HADST THOU NOT LOVED A MORTAL--
NO!!
SEAL?!
...BEEN LOVE...
IF THERE HAD NOT...
...NOT IN SORROW !!
...IN SORROW ?!


...IN SOR-ROW...
DON'T SEAL ME...





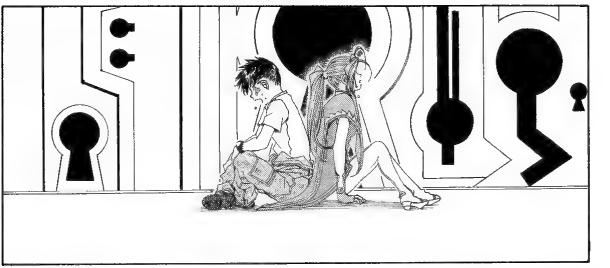
WERE BOTH GRANTED.
YOUR WISHES...
WAS THE VERY OCEAN HE SAW.
THE OCEAN YOU SAW...
...WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL OCEANS.
THE OCEAN THE TWO OF YOU SAW...

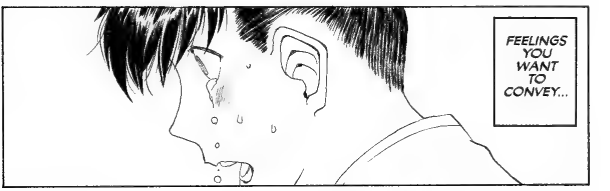

...THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO SINK IN SORROW.
HE, TOO...
YES...

KANGG

WSSHH
...!
FWOOSH
PLP
PLP
PLP
ahh
ah
haa

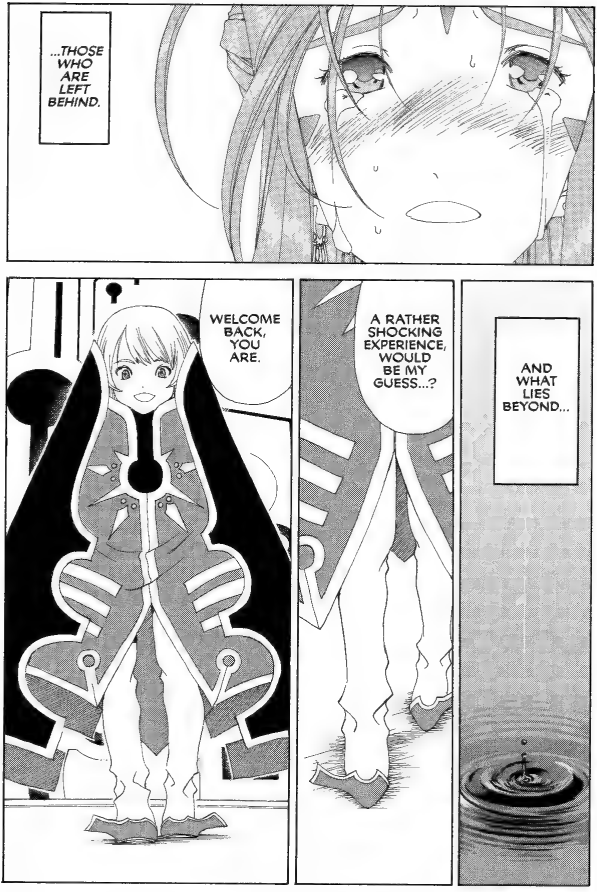
shipp
ghh
hggh
hahh
ah
hah

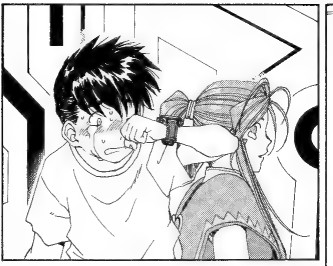


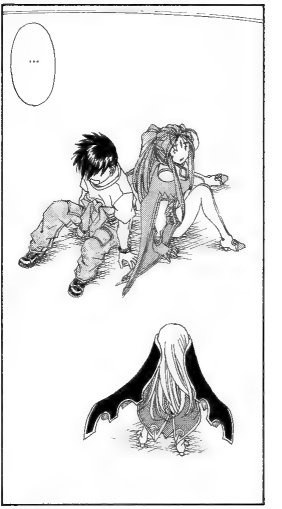

FEELINGS YOU WANT TO CONVEY...

FEELINGS THAT DON'T GET ACROSS...

THOSE WHO MUST LEAVE...

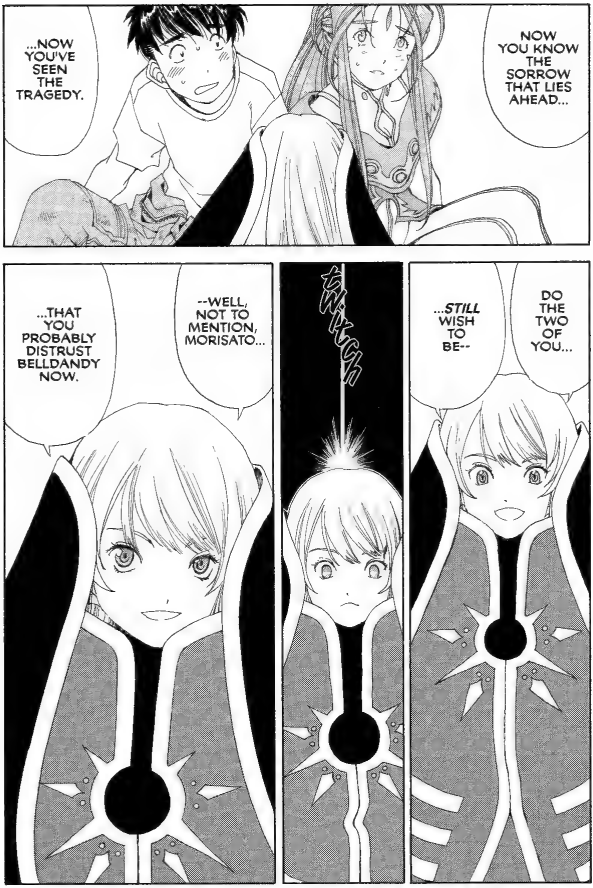

...THOSE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND.
WELCOME BACK, YOU ARE.
A RATHER SHOCKING EXPERIENCE, WOULD BE MY GUESS...?
AND WHAT LIES BEYOND...




...

...I BACK ...?
AM...

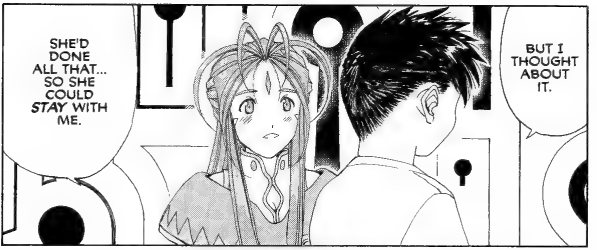
THAT'S HOW THE TWO OF YOU WILL END UP.
YOU SAW HOW IT WAS?


NOW YOU KNOW THE SORROW THAT LIES AHEAD...
...NOW YOU'VE SEEN THE TRAGEDY.
DO THE TWO OF YOU...
...STILL WISH TO BE--
AWKWARD
--WELL, NOT TO MENTION, MORISATO...
...THAT YOU PROBABLY DISTRUST BELLDANDY NOW.

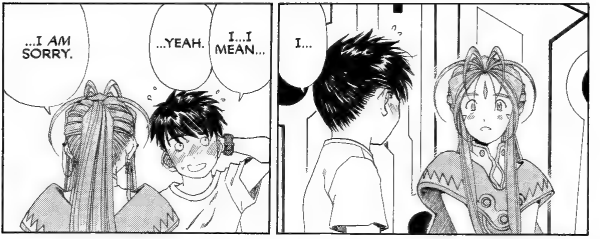
...
...OH.
...YOU'VE BEEN SECRETLY RE-STRAINED ALL THIS TIME, HAVEN'T YOU...?
WHAT'S SO *"EH?"* ABOUT IT?
...EH?
SO THEN *YOU* MISUNDER-STOOD, TOO.
...WHAT?
...

...HAVE I MISUNDER-STOOD ...?
AND JUST WHAT...
EH?
...YOU DON'T?
YOU...
I'M SORRY...
EVEN YOU, BELL-DANDY ...?
...HOW I'D MADE BELLDANDY SUFFER.
IT WAS A SHOCK WHEN I LEARNED...

SHE WAS ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT ME...
...FROM THE CONSE-QUENCES OF MY THOUGHT-LESS REQUEST.
I WANT A GODDESS LIKE YOU TO BE WITH ME ALWAYS!
I WAS JUST SO SORRY...
...THAT I'D MADE HER DO ALL THAT.

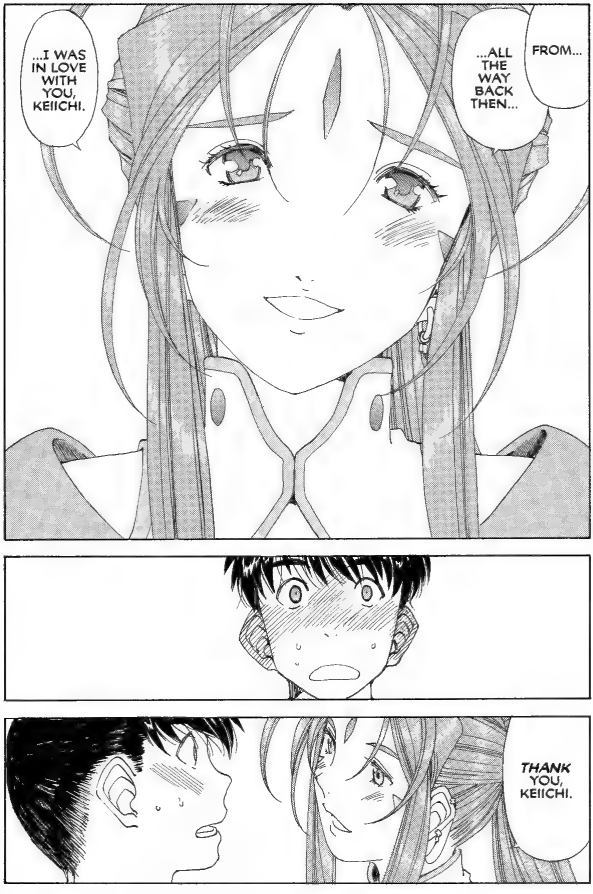

SHE'D DONE ALL THAT... SO SHE COULD *STAY* WITH ME.
BUT I THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

...LOVE THIS GODDESS EVEN *MORE*...?
HOW COULD I NOT...


...I AM SORRY.
...YEAH.
I...I MEAN...
I...

WE GOD-DESSES SEARCH FOR PEOPLE IN TROUBLE...
...AND JUDGE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS WORTHY OF SALVATION.
...?
THERE IS...
...ONE OTHER THING THAT I NEVER TOLD YOU, KEIICHI.
FROM UP THERE, I WATCHED.
...I WATCHED YOU ALL THE TIME, KEIICHI.

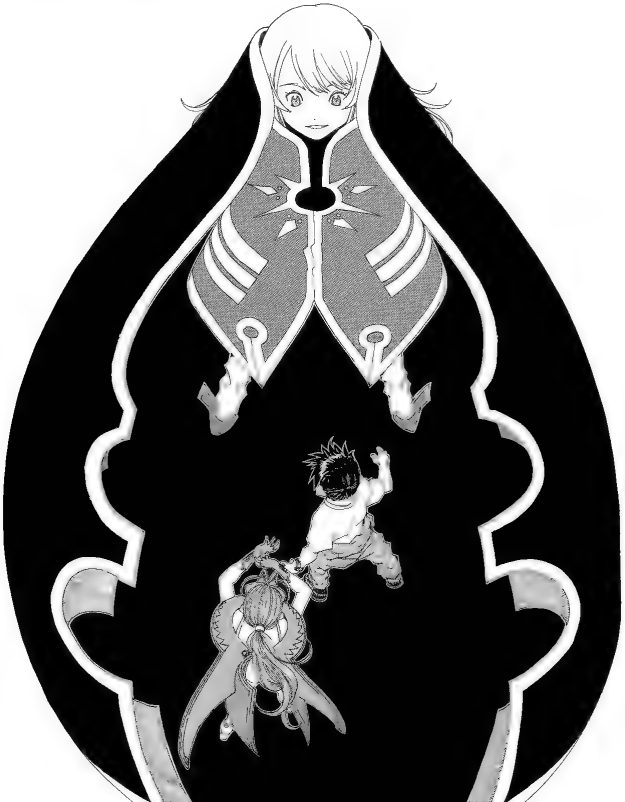
...AND SO KIND.
SO EAR-NEST...
SO CLUM-SY...
I ALWAYS WATCHED YOU.
I ALWAYS CHEERED FOR YOU.
YOU CAN DO IT.


...I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU, KEIICHI.
...ALL THE WAY BACK THEN...
FROM...
THANK YOU, KEIICHI.

BELL-DANDY...
...I'M SO HAPPY I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
...THERE'S STILL THE *MAIN QUESTION*.

CHAPTER 294

Determination towards Determination



...RIGHT?
THE TWO OF YOU SAW IT...
HUH?
...THE MAIN QUESTION.
...TO BE TOGETHER AS ONE...?
DO YOU STILL WISH...

WHEN YOU *KNOW* THAT TRAGIC ENDING AWAITS YOU...?
HOW DO *YOU* KNOW IT AWAITS US?
I KNOW...
'CUZ I'M A GOD.
THAT'S WEIRD.

...TELLS US THE FUTURE IS UNDECIDED.
EITHER WAY, THIS SYSTEM ITSELF...
WHAT'S WEIRD?
OR ARE YOU JUST PREJU-DICED?
YOU'RE ABLE TO LIE?
WHAT...
...DO YOU MEAN?

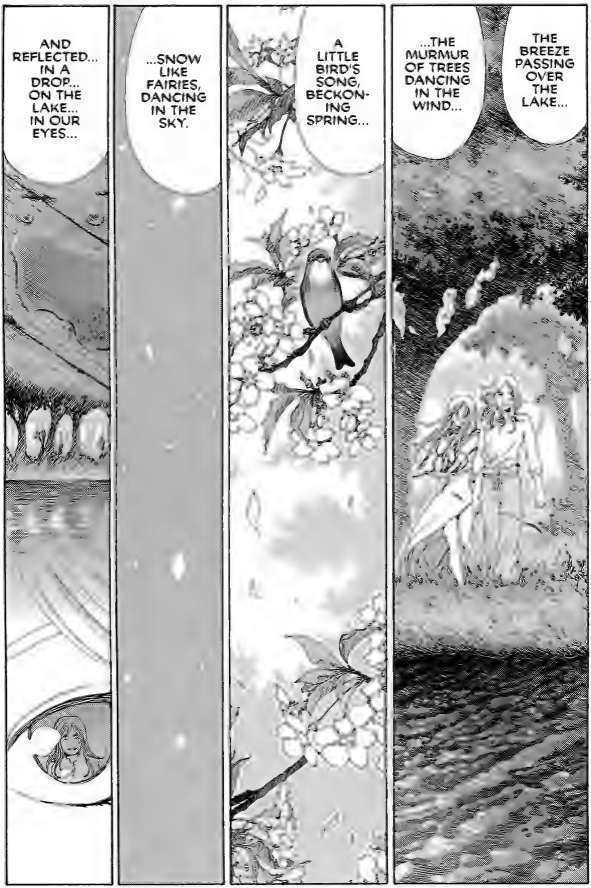
IF EVERYTHING IS DECIDED...
...THERE'D BE NO NEED FOR THE GATE OF JUDGMENT.
...
...
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THE SUPPLICANTS WILL PASS.
ERGO, THE FUTURE MAY NOT ALWAYS END IN TRAGEDY.

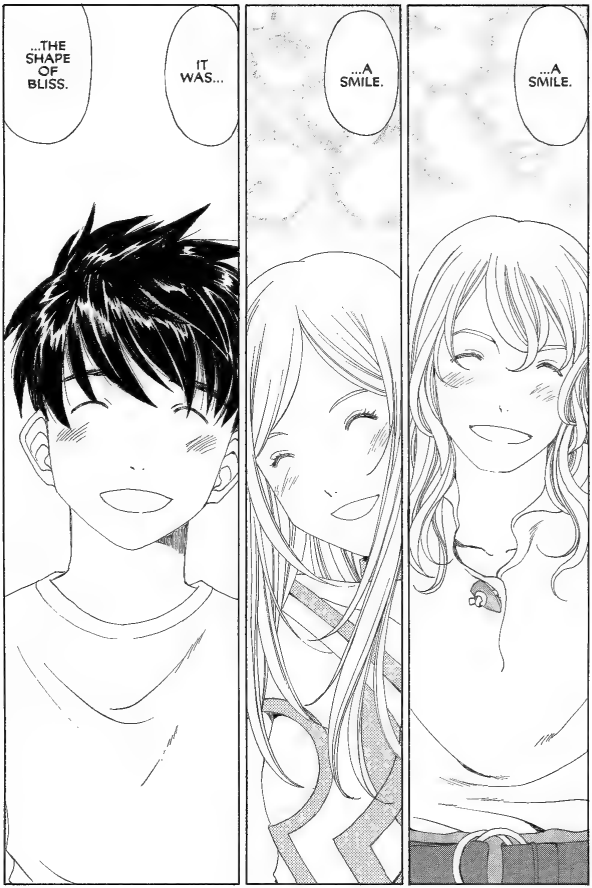
"I GIVE UP." ISN'T THAT HOW HUMANS DO IT?
WHAT'S *THAT?*
THAT'S ENOUGH, THANKS.
NO, WAIT, IT GOES LIKE THIS, RIGHT ...?
...DON'T YOU TWO...
AL-THOUGH...
...IS *NOT* ZERO.
THE POSSI-BILITY...
...IT DOES SEEM I WAS BEING PREJUDICED.

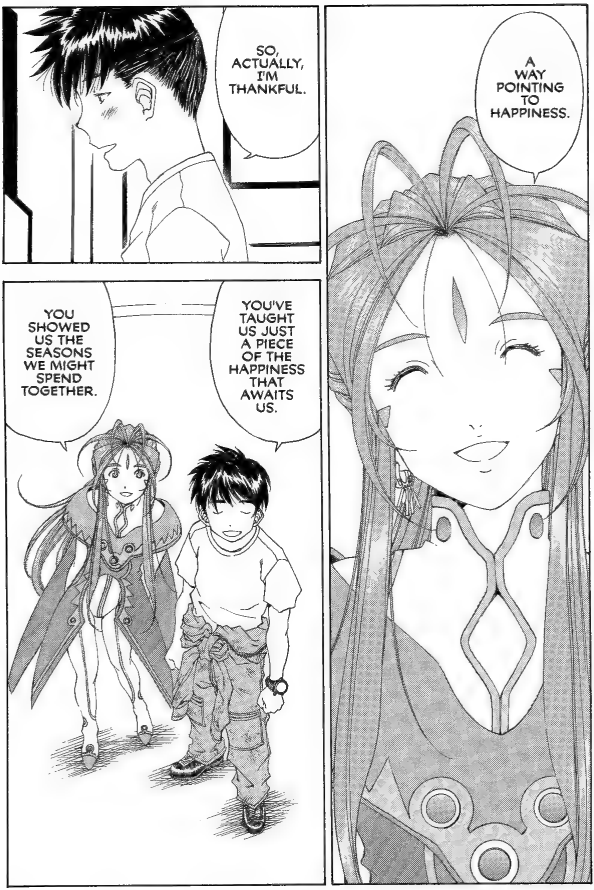
...EVEN CONSIDER THE *POSSI-BILITY...*
...YOU'LL REPEAT THAT GRIEF?
SEE?
IT *DOES* FRIGHTEN YOU AFTER ALL.
THERE'S NO NEED TO STRAIN YOURSELF.

YOU DON'T WANT TO MAKE BELLDANDY DISAPPEAR, DO YOU...?
YES... IT WAS FULL OF SADNESS.
WAVE AFTER WAVE...
...COMING UP LIKE AN ENDLESS SPRING.
I'VE NEVER TOUCHED...
...A SORROW SO DEEP.

BUT EVEN SO...
AND SO...
RIGHT, AS I SAID.
I DID, TOO...
...I FELT A HAPPINESS THAT WAS EVEN DEEPER.
...SUCH A SOLID TRUST.
...SUCH A PLEASANT PEACE OF MIND...


AND REFLECTED... IN A DROP... ON THE LAKE... IN OUR EYES...
...SNOW LIKE FAIRIES, DANCING IN THE SKY.
A LITTLE BIRD'S SONG, BECKON-ING SPRING...
...THE MURMUR OF TREES DANCING IN THE WIND...
THE BREEZE PASSING OVER THE LAKE...


...A SMILE.
...A SMILE.
IT WAS...
...THE SHAPE OF BLISS.

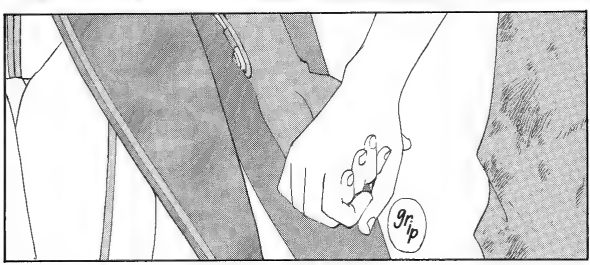

SO, ACTUALLY, I'M THANKFUL.
A WAY POINTING TO HAPPINESS.
YOU'VE TAUGHT US JUST A PIECE OF THE HAPPINESS THAT AWAITS US.
YOU SHOWED US THE SEASONS WE MIGHT SPEND TOGETHER.

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THEY'D PERCEIVE...
...HAPPINESS AND JOY IN THAT PLACE...
AND YET,
SO, YOU STILL SAY...
...EVEN KNOWING THE SORROW THAT AWAITS YOU AT YOUR PARTING...
...THAT YOU'RE DETERMINED TO WALK TOGETHER?

...IT WAS LONG AGO.
...
I'M REMEMBERING SOMETHING BELL-DANDY TOLD ME...
THE MORE YOU HURT AT THE PARTING... THE MORE IT PROVES THE DEPTH OF YOUR LOVE.

AND IF YOU ALWAYS FEAR SORROW... YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LOVE AT ALL.
IS THAT SO...?
SHE SAID THAT ...?
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT THEN, BUT...
...THAT WAS BELL-DANDY'S RESOLVE.
I THINK HER WORDS WERE... MEANT FOR THIS MOMENT.

...HOW CAN I ANSWER WITH ANYTHING *LESS...?*
AND IF I KNOW SHE'S RESOLVED TO THIS...


grip

RE-SOLVED... YOU SAY?
HOW RESOLVED ARE YOU, REALLY...?
BY THE WAY...
EH? HUH?
I'M GATE, OF COURSE...
...
...WHO ARE YOU?

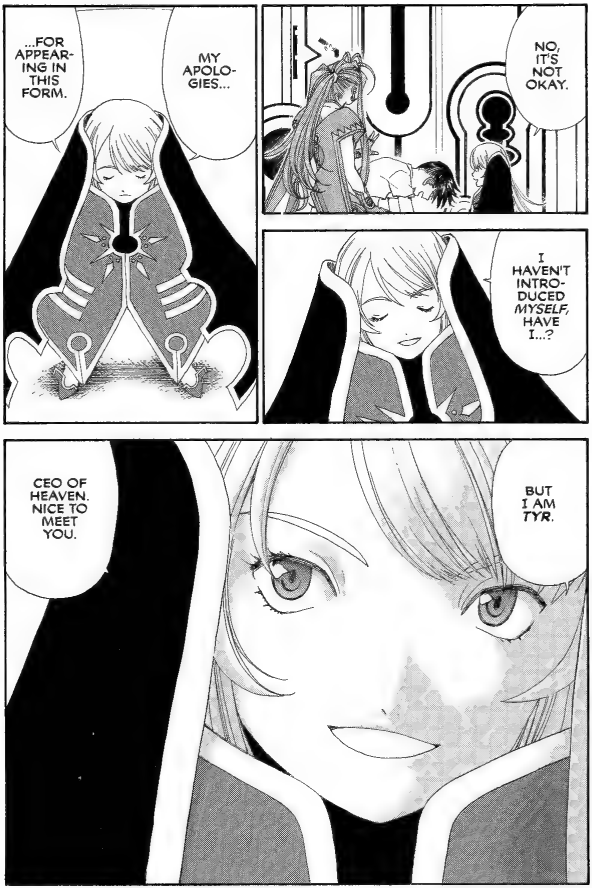
YOU ARE A LIAR!
...I'M JUST NOT FEELING WELL... YOU KNOW?
UM...
YOU STOPPED TALKING LIKE HER A WHILE BACK.
SO YOU CAN LIE.
NO, NOT AT ALL.
IS GATE EASY TO HACK?
...IS ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE.
FOR SECURITY REASONS, TAKING OVER GATE...

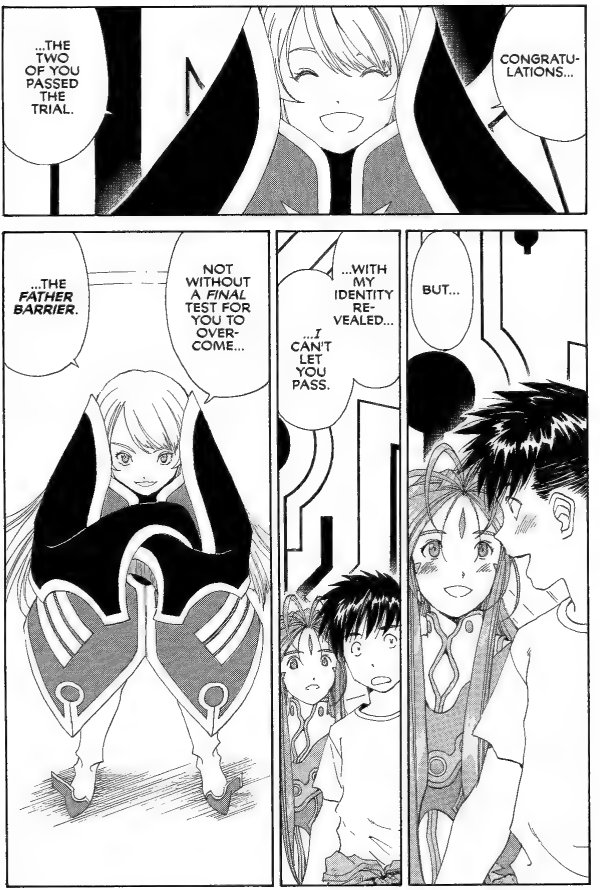
OR, IF YOU CAN LIE, AN *IRREGULAR* ENTITY.
THEN YOU MUST BE A POWERFUL ENTITY...
...THE *TRUTH*, NOW.
...*YOU'RE* A FORMIDABLE MAN YOURSELF.
WELL...
HA.

LONG TIME NO SEE... BELLDANDY.
...!!
FATHER ?!
HA

...
EHHHHH?!
N-N-NICE TO MEET YOU, SIR!
I MEAN, I GUESS WE'VE BEEN MEETING...
THIS GUY'S A RIOT.
YOU LOOK SO YOUNG, SIR!
I DIDN'T MEAN YOU HACKED GATE, SIR! "ACCESSED..."!

UM...
FA...
SIR! PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER, SIR!
...FATHER!!
EH?! IS IT OKAY ...?!
DO YOU WANT HER OR NOT?
...!!
WHAT AM I SAYING ...?!
UWAA!!


...FOR APPEARING IN THIS FORM.
MY APOLOGIES...
NO, IT'S NOT OKAY.
I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED *MYSELF*, HAVE I...?
BUT I AM *TYR*.
CEO OF HEAVEN. NICE TO MEET YOU.


CONGRATU-LATIONS...
...THE TWO OF YOU PASSED THE TRIAL.
BUT...
...WITH MY IDENTITY RE-VEALED...
...I CAN'T LET YOU PASS.
NOT WITHOUT A *FINAL* TEST FOR YOU TO OVER-COME...
...THE ***FATHER BARRIER***.

CHAPTER 295

The CEO of Heaven's Barrier

MY FINAL TRIAL AS HER FATHER...
...WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?
HUH?
EH?
BUT YOU SAID WE PASSED...
YES, YOU DID.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH--
YOU PASSED THE GATE...
THE CERTIFICATE THAT YOU PASSED THE GATE OF JUDGMENT.
MM...
...
...AH. HERE!!
...BUT YOU ENTERED INTO MY DOMAIN.
MY TERRITORY... AS A FATHER.

HUH?
huhh?
IF YOU HADN'T BEEN SO STRANGELY KEEN...
...I COULD'VE KEPT MY TRUE IDENTITY A SECRET.
ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY...
YES! IT'S YOUR FAULT.
FATHER...
NOOOO!
...ARE YOU AMUSING YOURSELF?

...
NO... I...er... OF COURSE I'M NOT.

...IS TO TRANSCEND THE LOGIC OF HEAVEN AND THE HUMAN WORLD.
WHAT YOU TWO ARE TRYING TO DO...
KEIICHI, THIS GIRL'S SCARY.
THIS GIRL IS YOUR DAUGHTER.
THE AMUSING PART CAN'T BE HELPED... 'CAUSE KEIICHI IS *SO* AMUSING.
BUT EVEN IF IT'S AMUSING... IT'S NO ***JOKE***.

THAT MAY BE ENOUGH FOR THE GATE OF JUDGMENT...
INDEED, YOU SHOWED US YOUR DETERMINATION.
AND HERE'S WHY.
...BUT IT'S *NOT* ENOUGH FOR ME AS A FATHER.
...PROVED HIMSELF BEFORE ***ME***.
BECAUSE KEIICHI STILL HASN'T...

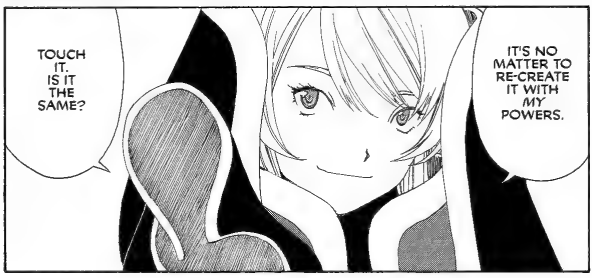
I EXPECT YOU TO WORK A MIRACLE!
IF YOU WISH TO MARRY MY DAUGHTER...
...

A... MIRACLE?
YES... A MIRACLE.
BUT PASSING THE GATE OF JUDGMENT...
...WAS MIRACLE ENOUGH.
IT WAS A BIT *SURPRISING*...
...BUT A *MIRACLE?*

...THE CEO OF HEAVEN.
I WANT SOMETHING TO CONFOUND EVEN ME...
HMM.
THAT... THAT'S...
...LIKE WHAT?
CAN YOU WORK SUCH A MIRACLE, LAD...?

I'LL SET A TASK BEFORE YOU.
IN YOUR SPECIALTY!
FLASHH

WHAT'S IT DOING *HERE* ...?!
MY *BMW!!*
...EH?


TOUCH IT. IS IT THE SAME?
IT'S NO MATTER TO RE-CREATE IT WITH *MY* POWERS.

INCRED-IBLE...
...THE FEEL OF THE BOLTS...
...THE SCRATCHES ON THE SCREEN AND TANK...
...EVEN THE WORN-DOWN GRIP IS THE SAME.
...BUT WHY CONJURE THIS UP?
CAN'T YOU GUESS...?
YOU'RE GONNA *RIDE* IT.

...?
LET ME CREATE A GOAL FOR YOU.
WHERE?
WHIR
KWAAM

...?!
RRMBLL
KRAKK
SKKKRAAKK

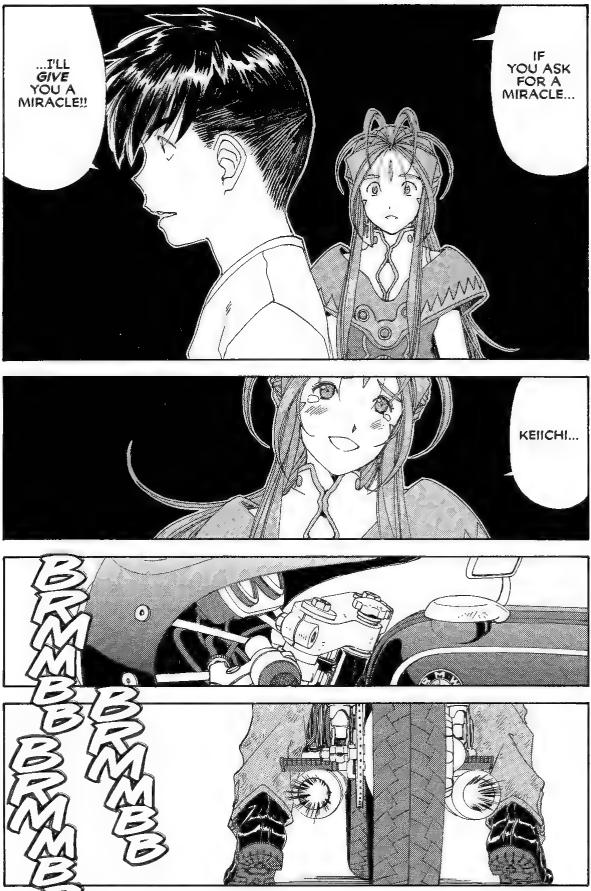
BELL-DANDY !!
KEIICHI !!
I WOULDN'T JUMP IF I WERE YOU...
...I'VE CANCELED YOUR ABILITY TO FLY.
EH...?

YOU CAN MEET AGAIN... IF YOU CAN REACH HER.
THE GOAL IS BELL-DANDY.
DON'T WORRY.
AH...!
THAT'S ALL...?
REACH HER?
THAT'S THE MIRACLE.
THAT'S RIGHT.

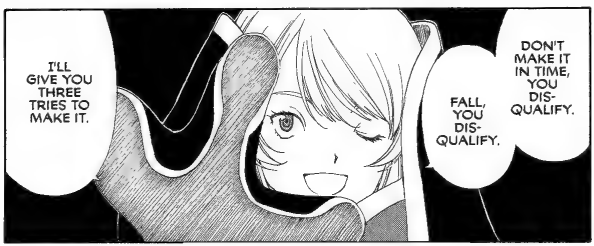
IF YOU CAN RIDE THIS TRACK AND REACH BELLDANDY...
...WOULDN'T THAT BE A MIRACLE?

IF... IF... IF I GO OFF...
...THE EDGE...
...I'LL FALL FOR REAL, WON'T I...?
YES, YOU WILL.
AND YOU HAVE...
...THREE MINUTES TO DO IT.

THAT'S TOTALLY...
THREE MINUTES ?!
YET IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE...
I BELIEVE I USED THE WORD "MIRACLE" ...?
I WON'T KNOW TILL I TRY.
I'LL DO IT.
...
WERE YOU GOING TO GIVE UP...?
...FOR THE USUAL MORISATO, THAT IS.


IF YOU ASK FOR A MIRACLE...
...I'LL GIVE YOU A MIRACLE!!
KEIICHI...
BRMMBB
BRMMBB
BRMMBB
BRMMBB

BRRRRMB
BRRRRMB


I'LL GIVE YOU THREE TRIES TO MAKE IT.
FALL, YOU DIS-QUALIFY.
DON'T MAKE IT IN TIME, YOU DIS-QUALIFY.

...WAIT FOR ME!!
BELL-DANDY...
...I WILL!
...READY?
YOU...
ARE...
BA-BOOM

FIVE...
BRMB
DRMB
FOUR...
BRMB
WITH A MOTOR-CYCLE...
DRMB
WITH MY MOTOR-CYCLE...

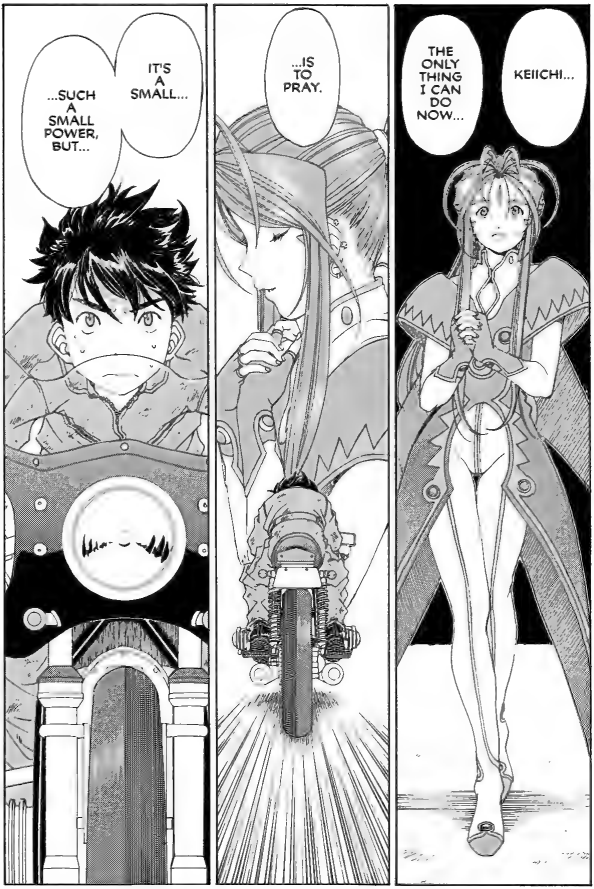
CHAPTER 296

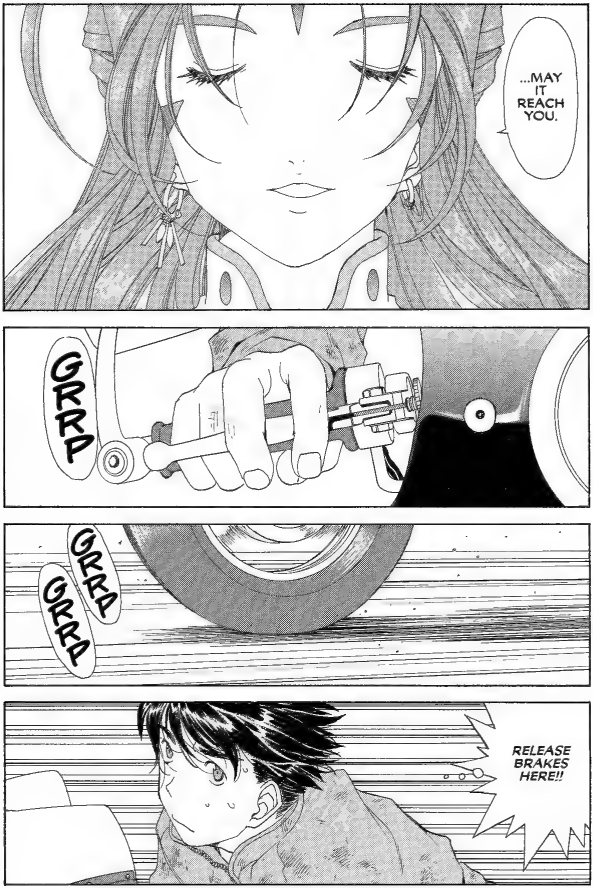
The First Challenge

THREE...
DRMMB
BRMMB
TWO...
ONE...
BRMM
BRMM
BRMM

...ZERO!!

VRRM
M
M
M
M
GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT
GATE
ENGAGEMENT


KEIICHI...
THE ONLY THING I CAN DO NOW...
...IS TO PRAY.
IT'S A SMALL...
...SUCH A SMALL POWER, BUT...


...MAY IT REACH YOU.
GRRD
GRRD
GRRD
RELEASE BRAKES HERE!!

LOOK AT THE COURSE AHEAD!!
DON'T LOOK DOWN!!
AHEAD !!

I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT...
...!
KRUUU
SKREE

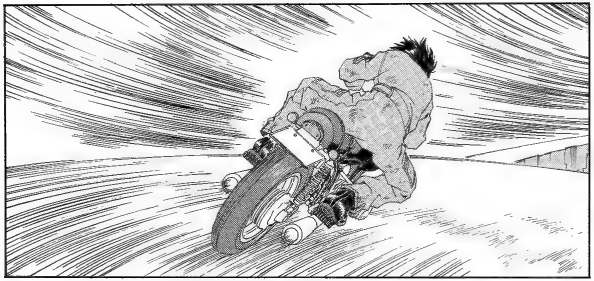
HAHH
HAA

AND THAT WAS JUST THE FIRST CURVE...
...KEIICHI, YOU HAVE THREE TRIES!!
...IT'S NOT OVER YET...
...!
haa
hah

...ISN'T OVER YET.
EVEN MY FIRST TRY...

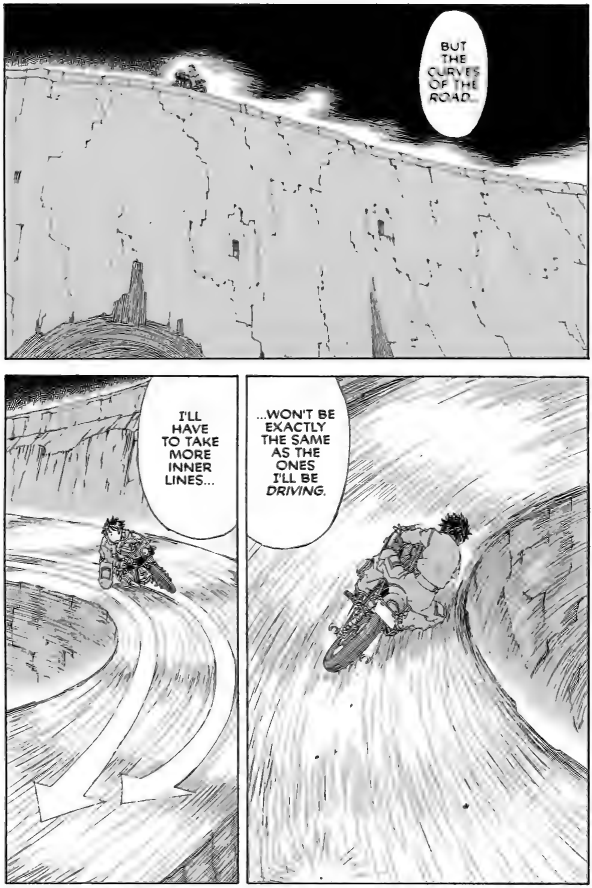
RIGHT CURVE... ABOUT A FORTY-METER RADIUS.
DRRRMB
GRRP
BRMMBB

KEIICHI ISN'T *BAD* AT GIVING UP.
HE'S BAD AT GIVING UP.
OH, HE'S GONNA CONTINUE ...?
YES... BUT YOU HAVE IT WRONG.
HE ***DOESN'T*** GIVE UP.

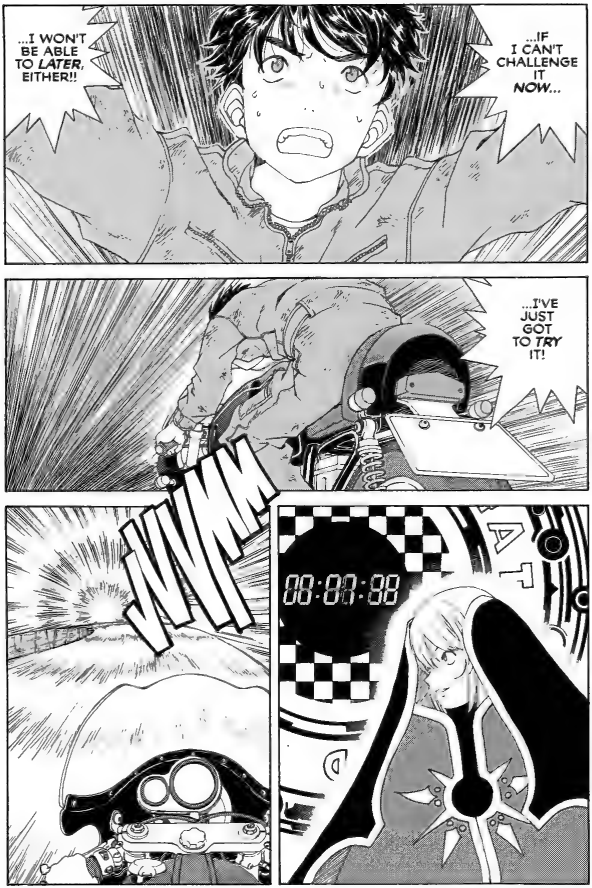


DOWN-HILL, COMING OUT OF THE CURVE...
...THE REAR TIRE TENDS TO LOSE TRACTION.
THE NEXT LEFT IS ALSO A LARGE DOWN-HILL...
...THE RIGHT AFTER THAT, UPHILL... PRETTY STEEP.
I'VE GOT THREE CHANCES...

...HE'S USING THIS CHANCE TO TRY TO LEARN THE COURSE.
OH, I SEE HIS GAME.
I'M GETTING A FEEL FOR THE TEMPO NOW.
...THE MOUNTAINS AT NIGHT ARE LIKE THIS.
YEAH...


BUT THE CURVES OF THE ROAD...
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MORE INNER LINES...
...WON'T BE EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE ONES I'LL BE *DRIVING*.

B-BUT THAT MEANS...
shudder
NO...


...I WON'T BE ABLE TO *LATER*, EITHER!!
...IF I CAN'T CHALLENGE IT *NOW*...
...I'VE JUST GOT TO *TRY* IT!
VVVM
00:00:00

VROOOOM
HERE I COME...
DOWN-SHIFT!!
BRAKE !!
...HERE I COME!
HERE I COME...!
HEY, KEIICHI...
HERE I COME...

HUH?
00:09:78
YOU GOT LESS THAN FIVE SECONDS.
AND ALSO... WATCH OUT!!
KEIICHI !!
!!
...!

GRRP
SKREE SKREE
WAHHH!
UH...

THWAMM

...?!
...EHH?!
SKREESKREE
WHAT... HAP-PENED?

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The book you are reading now goes on sale August 2014; it was in August of 1994 that the first issue of *Oh My Goddess!* was released in English from Dark Horse. I say "issue," because, as many of you know, in those days the most common way to release manga here was to do a chapter or two each month in comic book format, and then later collect those chapters as graphic novels. Today, of course, you can find chapter 1 in volume 1 of *Oh My Goddess!*

It's a happy coincidence that 46, the volume of *OMG!* that happens to come out the month of its twentieth anniversary in English (it's several years older in Japan), harks back to the events of that very first chapter, just as we see on pages 95–96, where Belldandy (with streaks in her hair, as she had back then) remembers her job with the Goddess Technical Help Line, and how she met Keiichi. And of course, what Keiichi said in that same chapter: *"I want a goddess like you to be with me always."*

As I've said many times, the longevity of *Oh My Goddess!* is due to reader support. The great thing is that you've not only kept the series going just for yourselves; you've kept it going for the people who, years after the series began, might one day come across *OMG!* and become fans of it too. So it's also appropriate that our letters this time are from fans that talk about how they got into the series:

Hello there, Mr. Horn!

After reading Yamaguchi-san's letter in *Oh My Goddess!* Volume 42, I wanted to tell how I got into *OMG!* Back in 2004, I was walking in downtown Berkeley, CA, when I passed by the local comic book shop. They were handing out these sample booklets of manga from Tokyopop. Out of all the manga in the book, I liked the series *A.I. Love You!* the best. There were only six volumes, and I wanted more of it.

A couple years passed by, and when I was in junior high, I searched for the series on *Wikipedia*. Online it said it was based on *Oh My Goddess!* I checked out the anime, and fell in love with it—hard! High school passed by, and I got into college. The anime was on Netflix, and I rewatched it and fell in love all over again! Keen to keep up with the story since the anime ended, I quickly started buying used books wherever I could find them, and now after six long years, I've finally caught up! I really appreciate all the work that Fujishima-san does, and all that y'all at Dark Horse are up to! Thank you very much for your steadfast work on the manga; I can't wait until the next one comes out.

Venkat Apparao
Fremont, CA

Fremont—the semi-quasi-kinda affordable part of the Bay Area! Something I did not anticipate missing when I moved to green (and damp) Portland were the brown hills of the Bay Area; brown, because, like most of California, there's not too much water and the hills are only green for a few weeks in early spring. But the dry grasses give the hills a suede style of their own, and when I was at Japan Expo last year in Santa Clara, looking south to Mt. Hamilton and its famous observatory, I realized I missed them.

Venkat, I'm really pleased that your first step in discovering *Oh My Goddess!* was in a comics shop in Berkeley, as that's where I discovered my first manga back in the early eighties, *Barefoot Gen*. It was at the Comics & Comix store on

Telegraph Ave. In the eighties, thanks to a guy working there named Mike Ebert (the first cool *otaku* role model I had; he was my Kamina, although without the tragedy ^_^), it was well stocked with import anime and manga books and magazines. Berkeley in the eighties was an exciting time to be a young fan, with not only the stores supporting the scene but the highly influential (they are one of the groups that founded Anime Expo) Cal Animage club starting on campus on 1988, plus the 1987 launch in Berkeley of *ANIMAG*, the first English-language fan magazine with professional production values, for which Mike was art director.

Dear Letters to the Enchantress/Carl Gustav Horn and colleagues,

I've been reading *OMG!* from around the time volume 10 of the reprint came out. At the time I was working at a Chapters/Indigo store (our only real national bookstore chain up here in Canada) and was just recently introduced to manga by some of my colleagues (and Western comics, but that's another story). Anyways I thought it was about time I sent in a letter complimenting you and your counterparts on the production of these wonderful books.

By now I have quite the collection of ongoing manga on my bookshelf, but by far the Dark Horse ones are the most beautiful of all the publishers. From inclusion of the full-color art pages that other publishers grayscale (discernible from the darker shades), to the concise translations. Also the decision to conform to the new standard of flipped manga is appreciated, as it not only provides uniformity across my library, but also helped me to become accustomed to reading right to left, as I am currently learning Japanese.

That brings us now to the last little bit of this letter. I wanted to ask a few questions, as my current discipline of study is anthropology with a focus on linguistics. Later I plan to take a diploma course in teaching English as a second language (available to students possessing a bachelors' degree). Anyway, I wanted to ask if there were any recourses or methods you recommend for learning the Japanese language. I have taken a course and plan to take more, as it was a great help, especially in learning the *kana*.

Sorry to include this so late in the letter, but as I wrote I thought it needed saying and for the life of me I can't figure out how to make this new Windows 8 e-mail program insert new sentences instead of replacing the currently typed ones. Well without further ado, Fujishima-san's story is beautifully executed so that even though it spans 45 (currently) volumes, the story remains relevant and engaging without weighing the story down with repetitiveness and an overabundance of characters. Now off to order the two most recent volumes.

Thanks for reading till the end. I tend to ramble on in thought, even when I am writing.

Yours truly,
Spencer Cave
Devon, Alberta, Canada
spencercave@gmail.com

Thank you very much for your letter! I'm particularly glad to hear from a fan in Alberta, as Toren Smith, the person responsible for bringing *Oh My Goddess!* to the English-speaking world, was born and raised in Calgary.

In my view, there are a number of ways to get a good start in learning the fundamentals of the Japanese language, and certainly one can do so with classroom instruction. However, I believe that if one truly wants to become fluent in Japanese, the follow-up step must be living in Japan for at least a year, and preferably two. There are various ways to do this (as a foreign student, or possibly as an English teacher) but the point is to place yourself in an environment where you are obliged to use Japanese all the time and with a variety of people.

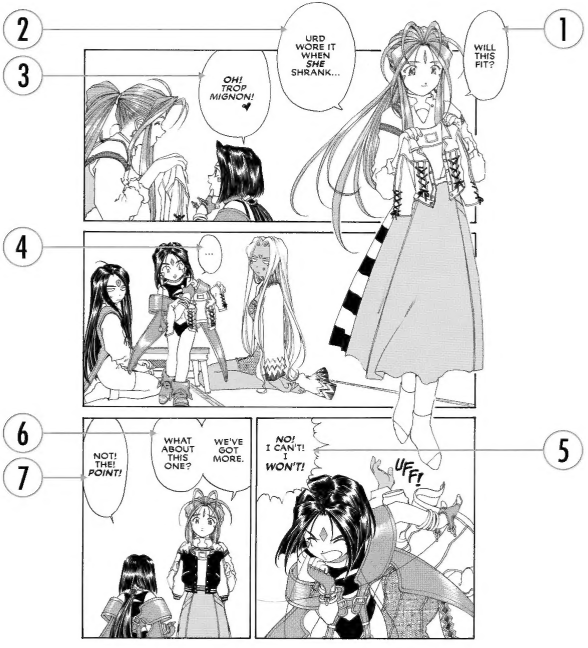
It isn't just Japanese this applies to; I think at some point with any foreign language you have to immerse yourself; a bit like studying swimming versus actually jumping into the pool. ^_^ Foreign study is the most typical way to do this, although I have known some people who had such opportunities without having to leave their country—for example, Felipe Smith, the creator of *Peepo Choo*, grew up working at a Japanese-owned karaoke club in Los Angeles, and thus became used to speaking the language even before he first set foot in Japan.

We'll look forward to seeing you all again in volume 47, and once again, thank you for twenty years of support for *Oh My Goddess!*

—CGH

STOP! This is the back of the book!

This manga collection is translated into English, but arranged in right-to-left reading format to maintain the artwork's visual orientation as originally drawn and published in Japan. If you've never read comics this way before, take a look at the diagram below to give yourself an idea of how to go about it. Basically, you'll be starting in the upper right-hand corner, and will read each word balloon and panel moving right to left. It may take a little getting used to, but you should get the hang of it very quickly. Have fun! If this is the millionth manga you've read this way, never mind. ^_^



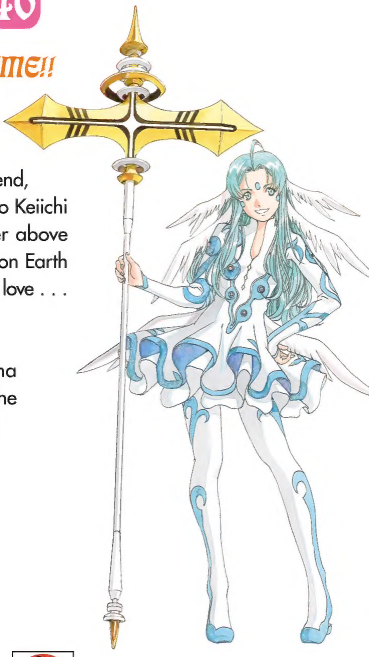
Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 46

20TH-ANNIVERSARY VOLUME!!

Somewhere inside the Judgment Gate, the minstrel learns the sad truth about the lady of the lake. Happiness can defy their fate for a time . . . but in the end, it will only turn to sadness again. Or so Keiichi and Belldandy are told by the power above them—but a couple who've prevailed on Earth and in Hell aren't about to give up their love . . . even against Heaven!

Winner of the thirty-third Kodansha Manga Award, *Oh My Goddess!* is the longest-running manga title in English!



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